ISLAM IN INDONESIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Rizal Sukma

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Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy

As home to more than 180 million Muslims, Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world. However, the identity of the Indonesian state has never been defined in terms of Islam. In fact, tension in the relationship between Islam and the state has been evident since Indonesia's independence in August 1945 and this tension stems from the dilemma of a dual state identity as Indonesia defines itself as neither theocratic nor secular. This makes the role of Islam in Indonesian politics and foreign policy a complex one.

Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy examines the origins of dual state identity and how it has affected the political dynamics in Indonesia, both in domestic and foreign policy. Although Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia, this book suggests that contrary to what might be expected, Islam has not played a dominant role in the country's post-independent politics and policy-making. However, since the fall of military-backed Suharto's government in May 1998, Islam has become a potent political force in Indonesia. With the revival of Islam, politics and policy-making in Indonesia have increasingly been subject to influences from political Islam. This book considers for the first time whether such influence has also been exerted upon the country's foreign policy. Rizal Sukma suggests that the role of Islam in foreign policy has always been a secondary one, arguing that the dilemma of dual identity and domestic weaknesses set the limits within which Islam can be expressed in foreign policy.

This book will provide a useful resource to all those with an interest in the role of Islam in International Politics as well as students of Asian and Religious Studies.

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Preface

As home to more than 180 million Muslims, Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world. Given that reality, one might assume that Islam is bound to play a significant, if not dominant, role in the country's politics and policy-making throughout its post-colonial history. However, a closer examination of the political history of post-independent Indonesia reveals that this was not the case. Tension in the relationship between religion and the state had been evident since the state-formation process prior to the declaration of independence in mid-1945, during which the founders of the Republic were engaged in an intense debate on the basis of the state. The debate reflects deep-seated ideological and political divisions between *kebangsaan* groups (secular nationalist) who preferred a non-theocratic form of the state and the Islamic group who argued for an Islamic state. The independence was declared in August 1945 with a "compromise" between the two groups that the new Republic would take neither secular nor theocratic as its identity; it would be a state based on the ideology of *Pancasila* (Five Principles) that ensures an equal treatment of all religions.

Such a compromise, however, did not solve the problem of state identity. On the contrary, it reinforced the dilemma of dual identity that any government in Indonesia has to take into account in the policy-making process. On the one hand, the majority of its population are Muslims. This reality cannot be ignored by the state, because Islam serves as a source of values and norms which guides the behaviour and life of the society. Islam has also been central to social and political legitimisation within the society. On the other hand, the reality of religious pluralism serves as an important constraint which prevents the government from defining the state in terms of one religion. Such a theocratic identity would contradict the ideals of Indonesia's unity as a nation. Therefore, any government in Indonesia is obliged to move beyond strict secularism by taking into account the Muslim's aspirations but short of moving towards the establishment of an Islamic state. This complex political reality requires a delicate management of state affairs.

That delicate management of dual identity dilemma is also extended to the field of foreign policy. Here, the nature of Indonesia as a non-theocratic state

seemed to have found its clearest expression. Indeed, despite its status as the religion of the majority, Islam has never been adopted as the official defining framework for Indonesia's foreign policy. Nor does it serve as the basis for the conduct of the Republic's foreign relations. Instead, since Indonesia proclaimed its independence from the Dutch in August 1945, the Republic's foreign policy has been defined in terms of universal values which serve domestic national interests rather than globally driven transnational ones. Therefore, the role of Islam in shaping the agendas and the conduct of Indonesian foreign policy has been secondary.

In so far as "the Islamic factor" came into play in the formulation of foreign policy, it has always been placed within the context of domestic political considerations. In other words, domestic politics set the context for the role and influence of Islam in Indonesia's foreign policy. Indeed, the primacy of domestic politics, reflected in the continued attempt to advance the interests of the state and regime, has served as the dominant defining framework for Indonesia's foreign policy since the Republic's independence in August 1945. Such overriding influence of domestic politics on foreign policy reflects a common condition prevalent in many post-colonial states. It reflects a degree of weakness in the ongoing and often difficult process of state-building, regime legitimation, and political competition in the context of limited economic resources and the imperative of development. Within that condition of domestic weakness, another dilemma emerges. On the one hand, religion often serves as a convenient instrument through which the contest for legitimacy and power is fought. On the other hand, however, the imperative of development, which serves as the basis for regime legitimacy, in reality often dictates a dependence upon the support from the international community, especially the West.

This book explores the extent to which foreign policy in Indonesia has been influenced by Islamic considerations. It investigates the place and role of the Islamic factor in Indonesia's foreign policy in terms of the question of state identity and the reality of domestic weakness. These two factors serve as the primary context within which the relationship between Islam and foreign policy in Indonesia can be more satisfactorily explained and understood.

Jakarta, July 2002

Acknowledgements

The seeds of this book were planted in an unusual place. It emerged out of a conversation between myself and a close friend in a corner of the coffee shop at Grand Hyatt Hotel in Jakarta in mid-1997. In the conversation, I was reminded that even though much has been written about Indonesian foreign policy, very few analysts have tried to investigate the place of Islam in Indonesian diplomacy. Aware of the complexity of the subject, initially I was reluctant to take up the challenge to conduct a study on the subject. The friend, however, insisted that as the role of Islam was growing in importance during what appeared at the time as the last years of Suharto's New Order regime, a study on Islam in Indonesian foreign policy would fill the gap in the subject. The friend, Dr. Douglas E. Ramage, Representative of the Asia Foundation (TAF) in Jakarta, soon offered that such a study, if I wanted to take it up, would become part of a Project on Domestic Dynamics of Foreign Policy in Asia that TAF was planning.

I finally took up the challenge, and my research on the subject started in 1998. The result was published as a short working paper by The Asia Foundation in September 1999. To my surprise, the working paper received enthusiastic response from many readers, both in Indonesia and abroad. For this reason, my deepest gratitude goes to my friend, Douglas Ramage, whose encouragement and insights prompted me to start the project.

I would also like to thank my supervisor and teacher when I was a graduate student at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), the late Professor Michael Leifer. It was due to his encouragement that I finally expanded the project into a book-length study. He carefully and tirelessly read the first draft of the first chapter that set out the framework of the book. I was deeply touched when I learned that despite his deteriorating health, Professor Leifer continued to offer me criticisms and helpful comments until March 2001, when the news about his passing away shocked me. The book would never have been conceived without his encouragement. For this reason, I would like to dedicate this book to the memory of Professor Michael Leifer.

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1 Introduction

For many post-colonial states, the question of state identity remains a crucial issue. Governments of newly independent states were often confronted with the reality that their territorial identity was inherited from colonial imposition. They also realised that in such circumstance a sense of shared identity needs to be invented in order to bind and hold together different sets of people, often with distinct ethnic and religious identities, within a united entity called a nation-state. Such an identity is also required in order to give a distinct meaning to their new status as an independent and sovereign political entity, different but equal to that of their former colonial masters. The construction of a national identity even becomes more imperative as governments of these new states are obliged to project the image of an indigenous government that represents the interests of local people rather than alien groups. In that context, the construction of a national identity and common consciousness, upon which the new political community will be based and organised, serves not only as a *raison d'être* for the creation of the state itself but also as an important basis for the legitimacy of new indigenous rulers.

The Muslim world, which encompasses many post-colonial states in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, is also faced with such a requirement. Since the attainment of independence after the Second World War, the process of identity-creation has continued to play a central role in the internal political process of these countries. It has even become an important aspect of the broader, ongoing task of nation-building. Indeed, the challenges are daunting because "nation-building, so called, is not an exercise which comes within the compass of five-year plans or indeed within the life span of any one generation of political leaders."[1] The success of this process is largely determined by the ability of the governments to overcome a set of problems that often engulf many post-colonial states. Indeed, the survival of the ruling regimes, and in some cases the states themselves, is contingent on the ability to address and manage problems such as internal economic weaknesses, political and ideological divisions, national identity, lack of modern political and legal institutions, the primacy of personal rule, unstable civil–military relations, regime (in)security, ethnic and religious differences, and external dependencies.

The prevalence of a state identity problem, however, is more evident in Muslim countries as it relates to the tension created by the process of reconciling the "official" state identity on the one hand and the "informal" identity of the society on the other. Indigenous governments in these states are presented with a difficult choice between inventing a new state identity and adopting the society's identity as the official state identity. In this context, the tension is deeply rooted in the nature of the relationship between religion and politics in these countries. On the one hand, Islam – as a set of values, norms and principles that informs and guides the life of the society of believers (the *ummah*) – has long become a reference with which the society identifies itself and, indeed, its existence as a source of identity preceded the creation of the state itself. On the other hand, post-independent governments often felt that an official state identity – which transcends ethnic or religious identification – needed to be invented with the object of promoting an abiding common consciousness and shared identity among groups of people with different religious beliefs. This is certainly the case in countries where a degree of pluralism exists despite the fact that Islam constitutes the majority religion.

Within such circumstance, the choice is often between a secular or theocratic form of state and, as mentioned earlier, such a choice is not an easy one. Some Muslim countries, especially in the Middle East, have relatively solved the problem by opting for an Islamic state. Within those countries, the identity problem usually does not constitute a crucial issue as the state has been defined in terms of Islam since the very beginning of the state-formation process. The problem usually occurs when a state either tries to avoid such a choice or refuses to define the state identity exclusively in terms of Islam. In such cases, the dilemma of state identity becomes a crucial issue that proves to be divisive in many Muslim countries. The non-theocratic identity of the state often serves as a rallying point for opposition groups to challenge the basis of both state and government legitimacy. Even in the case of the absence of opposition, tensions between the state and the society are likely to revolve around values and norms that should and should not be invoked within the society. In such circumstances, the state is often faced with the fact that as a religion Islam regularises not only the relationship between individuals and their Creator (*ibadah*) but also the relationship between an individual and society (*muamalah*) and the society itself.

Indeed, in many Muslim countries, the relationship between Islam and politics has been a central theme both in terms of religious and political discourse. In terms of Islamic political thought, this theme had been subject to intense political debate among Islamic scholars since as early as the ninth century. The political thinking of great Islamic philosophers such as Al-Farabi (870–950), Al-Mawardi (947–1058), Al-Ghazali (1058–1111), Ibn Taimiyah (1263–1328), and Ibn Chaldun (1332–1406) on this issue implicitly and explicitly recognised a close linkage between Islam and politics which gave rise to Islamic political expression of "al-Islam Din wa Daulah" (Islam is both

religion and the state). For Islam, the existence of the state is not only meant to serve the *lahiriyah* (material/worldly) needs of human beings but also their *ruhaniyah* (spiritual) and *ukhrawiyah* (heavenly) needs. In that context, religion serves as the foundation of statecraft which guides the behaviour of the people (al-Ra'iyah) and the rulers (ar-Ra'i). In other words, Islam neither recognises nor advocates a strict separation between religion and the state.[2]

Despite the centrality of Islam in the formation of state identity in many Muslim countries, the importance of this factor in foreign policy has been scarcely examined. Very few studies have considered the role of religion in the formation of state identity and how it affects the foreign policy of such countries. Indeed, the surge of serious interest in examining the role of religion itself as a factor in international relations has come about only after the end of the Cold War, particularly with regard to the role of Islam in politics and policy-making in Muslim countries. Such newly found interest, especially in the West, grew stronger with the outbreak of the Gulf War and Islamic resurgence in a number of Muslim countries. Indeed, there has been a burgeoning literature on the relationship between Islam and politics over the last decade or so.[3] One common assumption that is often emphasised in such studies is that "Islam is probably more deeply integrated institutionally into state and society than any other comparable religion."[4] Despite such a clear linkage between Islam and the state/society, however, the problem of state identity – secular or theocratic-remains an unresolved issue in many Muslim countries.

Given close linkage between Islam and politics, it is therefore natural to assume that Islam often informs politics and policy-making in Muslim countries or in countries where Islam is the religion of the majority of people, particularly in Arab–Islamic countries. As Islam in these countries constitutes the dominant domestic values, it is also natural to expect that Islamic values find their expression in the foreign policy of such states. However, in examining the relationship between Islam and foreign policy, there is a tendency among Western analysts to assume that in a country where Islamic forces play a role in politics and national policy-making, then that country tends to produce an anti-Western attitude.[5] It has been claimed, for example, that Islamists "are, and are likely to remain, anti-Western, anti-American and anti-Israel."[6] Following this assumption, it is also often argued that foreign policy of such a country will be driven by Islamic considerations and geared towards closer cooperation with the Islamic or Arab countries. In other words, there is a tendency in the West to assume that in countries where Islam is a source of dominant values – particularly when Islamic forces assume a significant political role – then the foreign policy of those countries tends to prevent active cooperation with the West.[7]

Within the Indonesian context, the relationship between Islam and politics in general and foreign policy in particular presents a curious case in this regard. With approximately 88 per cent of its total population being Muslims,

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim nation. However, tension in the relationship between religion and the state is clearly identifiable. It has been asserted, for example, that "on the one hand, [Indonesia's] people wants to implement Islamic *shari'ah*, but the government on the other hand tends to practice secular politics."[8] Such a tension had been evident in the state-formation process prior to the declaration of independence in mid-1945, during which the founders of the Republic were engaged in an intense debate on the basis of the state. The debate reflects deep-seated ideological and political divisions between *kebangsaan* groups (secular nationalist) who preferred a non-theocratic form of the state and the Islamic group who argued for an Islamic state. The independence was declared in August 1945 with a "compromise" between the two groups that the new Republic would take neither a secular nor a theocratic identity; it would be a state based on five principles (*Pancasila*) in which "belief in one God" constitutes the first principle.[9]

Such a compromise, however, did not solve the problem of state identity. On the contrary, it reinforced the problem of dual identity that any government in Indonesia has to take into account in the policy-making process. However, successive governments in Indonesia, especially during the period of Sukarno's Guided Democracy (1957–1965) and Suharto's New Order (1966–1998), tended to emphasise the non-religious nature of the state and its policies. The separation of the state and religion even found its clearest manifestation during Suharto's rule. For example, to reinforce his belief that politics should not be dictated by religious (read: Islam) considerations, Suharto in 1985 forced Islamic organisations to renounce Islam as their ideological basis (*azas*). In a cultural and personal sense, however, religion was given a special place, and indeed promoted by the state. The state, for example, promoted the interests of the Muslim community in non-political arenas such as in the case of pilgrimage, the setting up of Islamic courts, Islamic banking, the building of mosques, and religious propagation (*dakwah*). For Suharto, such an approach was meant as a mechanism by which the dilemma of dual identity could be reconciled.

In that context, the extent to which Indonesia's foreign policy is dictated by Islamic considerations has also been subject to debate. Writing in 1996, for example, an observer of Indonesian politics maintained that "Islam has not been a major consideration in Suharto's foreign policy."[10] Expressing an opposite point of view, an Indonesian scholar maintains that such an analysis must be questioned. He argued instead that "Indonesia's relations with Middle East countries, and also Indonesia's attitude towards various issues in the region, cannot be separated from the influence of 'Islamic factor.'"[11] It is important to note, however, that the relationship between Islam and foreign policy in Indonesia is not a question of "presence" or "absence." There is a third view represented by a long-time observer of Indonesia's foreign policy, Professor Michael Leifer, who maintains that Islam "is not without influence

on Indonesia's foreign policy, but that influence has been expressed much more in the form of constraint than in positive motivation."[12] Within such circumstance, he argued, "Indonesian governments, especially from the advent of the New Order inaugurated by General Suharto, have taken great care not to allow foreign policy to be dictated by Islamic considerations."[13] In other words, it is the nature of such influence that deserves closer and deeper analysis.

Indeed, despite its status as the religion of the majority, Islam has never been adopted as the official defining framework for Indonesia's foreign policy. Nor does it serve as the basis for the conduct of the Republic's foreign relations. Instead, since Indonesia proclaimed its independence from the Dutch in August 1945, the Republic's foreign policy has been defined in terms of universal values of serving "national interests." It is obliged "to oppose any form of colonialism" and "to participate in maintaining international stability based on independence, eternal peace and social justice."[14] In so far as "the Islamic factor" came into play in the formulation of foreign policy, it has always been placed within the context of domestic political considerations. In other words, domestic politics set the context for the role and influence of Islam in Indonesia's foreign policy. Indeed, the primacy of domestic politics, reflected in the continuous attempt to advance the interests of the state and regime, has served as the dominant defining framework for Indonesia's foreign policy since the Republic's independence in August 1945.

During the period of Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, the place of Islam in foreign policy calculations was secondary, if not conspicuously absent altogether. Islam was also given secondary place in foreign policy considerations of President Suharto who succeeded Sukarno in 1966. Indeed, both Sukarno and Suharto embarked upon political practices that assigned a secondary place to religion in national politics. These two Indonesian presidents, despite being Muslim themselves, did not show any compassion to demands by Muslim leaders that they were entitled to play an official role in national politics. During Suharto's era, it has been argued that his policy of denying Islam a formal role in national politics and policy-making reflected his religious background as an *abangan* (nominal Muslim) rather than a *santri* (practising/devout Muslim).[15] In the field of foreign policy, it has also been argued simplistically that the absence of Islam in Indonesia's foreign policy should be attributed to the fact that Suharto's Islam, and also Sukarno before him, is *abangan* in nature.[16]

In his attempt to explain the same phenomena, Professor Michael Leifer has argued that the secondary role of Islam in Indonesia's foreign policy calculations and agenda was related to the fact that despite Islam constituting the religion of more than 180 million Indonesians, it has not been used as the basis of the state.[17] Instead, the first two Indonesian leaders – Sukarno and Suharto – strongly invoked the identity of the Indonesian state as "neither theocratic nor secular." In foreign policy, such a formulation of state identity

is expressed in terms of *bebas-aktif* (independent and active) foreign policy which precludes the Republic from leaning to, or depending on, a particular country or a group of countries. This line of inquiry, which emphasises the nature of state identity rather than leaders' personal traits or regime type, provides a more useful framework for the attempt to explain the relative absence of Islam in Indonesia's foreign policy, particularly in light of recent developments in the post-Suharto era.

Indeed, the argument that Islam was totally absent in foreign policy due to the *abangan* character of Indonesia's leaders is difficult to sustain in the context of three important developments in Indonesia's domestic politics since the end of the 1980s, and more so after the resignation of President Suharto in May 1998. First, signs of change in the relationship between the state and Islam began to emerge by the end of the 1980s when President Suharto attempted to broaden his power base beyond the military and the secular-based ruling party Golkar. Suharto began to change his view of the role of Islam in New Order's society and tried to win the Islamic community's support. Suharto's government soon embarked upon a number of undertakings, the results of which could not have been more pleasing for the Muslim. In 1990, for example, Suharto made his much-publicised first pilgrimage to Mecca, an act widely seen as an attempt to establish his Islamic credentials further. Suharto also reversed his government's earlier firm stance on the banning of *jilbab* (head covering) for female students in state-owned schools. Then, the controversial national sports lottery, accused as sanctioning gambling by the Muslim community, was abandoned. A major decision was made to open the first Islamic Bank in 1991.

By 1992, it became evident that the state and Islam had embraced each other, leaving behind more than two decades of bitter experience of mutual hostility and suspicion. In the event, Indonesia's foreign policy during the later years of Suharto's New Order suggested that Islam does have the potential and capacity to influence foreign policy. However, the primacy of domestic political considerations, to which foreign policy is meant to serve, remains evident. The apparent "Islamisation" of foreign policy, in its declaratory form, was in the main meant to serve domestic political purposes of the regime. It suggests that the entrance of the Islamic factor into foreign policy served an important function of political legitimisation in the domestic context. The carefully managed entrance of the Islamic factor into foreign policy was undertaken within Suharto's changing political agenda, in which he exercised supreme authority over the course and direction of that change. In such circumstance, the Islamic factor continued to occupy secondary place in foreign policy calculations and reflected domestic political interests of the regime.

Second, Suharto's attempt to seek broader support from the Islamic community did not prevent his downfall. On 21 May 1998, he was forced to resign and his hand-picked Vice-President B. J. Habibie was sworn in hastily

as the country's third president. Islam, as it did at the beginning of the New Order, once again came to the central stage of national politics. However, it is important to note that the revival of Islam as a potent political force in the post-Suharto era should not be understood solely as a result of Suharto's strategy of cultivating Islamic support during the later years of his rule. It should also be understood as an attendant consequence of a surge in religious consciousness among many circles within the Muslim community, especially within the urban-based Muslim middle class. Therefore, unlike during the previous periods in the history of Indonesia's domestic politics after independence, it seems that this time Islam is in a better position to sustain its prominent role in politics and policy-making.

As the role of Islamic forces has increasingly become more important in domestic politics, it is of interest to investigate whether the same can also be said regarding foreign policy. If domestic politics are often seen as a primary source, if not determinant, of foreign policy, it raises the question whether the role of Islam in the making and conduct of the Republic's foreign policy – in light of recent changes in Indonesia's domestic politics – has also undergone significant change. Some analysts have suggested that Islam has not been an important factor in Indonesian foreign policy.[18] However, due to the emergence of what has been dubbed by William Liddle as the "Islamic turn" in Indonesian domestic politics,[19] it is of interest also to reassess the role and influence of Islam in contemporary Indonesian foreign policy.

The importance of Islam in Indonesian politics was made explicit by the election of Abdurrahman Wahid as Indonesia's fourth president in October 1999. His election represented a new era in the relationship between Islam and politics. Wahid was the most prominent Muslim leader who, before he became president, headed the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (The Awakening of Religious Scholars, NU), the largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia, and indeed in the world, with more than 30 million followers. His election was made possible by the instrumental role of, and the support from, a loose coalition of Islamic political parties under the Central Axis forces. As the role of Islamic groups was also central in facilitating Wahid's downfall in July 2001, the election of the secular-leaning Megawati Sukarno as president does not represent a decrease in the significance of Islam as a potent political force. In that context, the question of how the growing importance of Islam in domestic politics has influenced Indonesia's foreign policy provides an interesting line of inquiry.

This book examines the place and role of the Islamic factor in Indonesian foreign policy in terms of the question of state identity as a primary context within which the relationship between Islam and foreign policy can be more satisfactorily understood. It intends to take up three sets of main questions. First, why had Islamic considerations not been dominant in New Order's foreign policy during the period 1968 to 1990? How do Islamic groups perceive the conduct of Indonesian foreign policy under Suharto's New Order? Do they see the need for Indonesia to improve its relations with Muslim/Islamic

countries and pay more attention to issues pertinent to the Muslim world? Second, why since the early 1990s until his downfall in May 1998 had Suharto's New Order appeared to have paid more attention to issues with Islamic dimensions in its foreign policy? Can that be seen as a conscious move towards the Islamisation of foreign policy? Finally, with the rise of Islam as a potent political force in the domestic politics of post-Suharto's Indonesia, has the Islamic factor found more strident expression in the country's foreign policy? What is the future direction of the relationship between Islam, domestic politics, and foreign policy in post-Suharto's New Order?

By examining the place of Islam in Indonesian foreign policy, the book also attempts to provide insights on how the dynamic of domestic politics may have significant influence upon foreign policy in post-Suharto Indonesia. The importance of this study is reinforced by the fact that domestic politics has always been, and will continue to be, the primary driving force of Indonesian foreign policy. In other words, a study on the Islamic factor in foreign policy will also provide some insights on the position, role, and influence of Islam in contemporary Indonesia. More importantly, the study of the role of Islam in the making and conduct of foreign policy will contribute significantly to the understanding of not only the nature and characteristics of Indonesian foreign policy, but also the direction of the Republic's foreign policy during the current period of transition and also in the future.

2 Islam, politics, and the state in Indonesia

The origins of the dual identity dilemma

Before Dutch colonial administration managed to impose its rule over the vast archipelago called the East Indies, the area that is at present known as Indonesia consisted of several kingdoms. Within these kingdoms, from the Sultanate of Aceh in the west to the Sultanate of Ternate and Tidore in the east, Islam had already established itself as a dominant belief system of both the ruling elite and their subjects. In these kingdoms, Islam played a crucial role in rulers' claims to political legitimacy and authority. In some areas, such as in the Sultanate of Aceh in Sumatra and Banten in West Java, Islam even served as the official framework by which social and political order was structured. The nature of Islam in Indonesia, however, differs significantly from that in the Middle East, especially in terms of the degree of internal pluralism that existed within Islam itself. And, that degree of Islamic pluralism played an important role in the process of state-identity formation.

The main objective of this chapter is to examine the nature and role of Islam in Indonesia as it relates to the question of state formation and state identity. The first section begins with a discussion of the origins of internal Islamic pluralism as the primary context within which the creation of the Indonesian state and state-identity formation took place. It discusses the penetration of Islam in Indonesia, the role of Islam in the struggle for independence, and the nature of pluralism within Indonesia's Islamic community. The second section examines the Islamic factor in the process of state formation and in the debate on state identity. This section traces the origins of dual identity in Indonesia by looking at how the Republic's founders sought a formula of compromise that would serve as the political basis for the newly independent Indonesian state, thus giving it a distinct identity as a state.

Islam in Indonesia's society: the roots of Islamic pluralism

The coming of Islam

When Islam actually arrived in Indonesia remains an unresolved issue among historians.[1] This is due to the absence of agreement among historians

regarding the standard criteria by which the arrival of Islam can be determined. Some historians use minimum formal-religious criteria such as the formal confession of faith and Islamic inscriptions on gravestones, especially in the forms of Islamic names or the use Arabic. Others maintain that the arrival of Islam should be determined at the time when Islam and its institution began to function within an existing Muslim community.[2] The first view maintains that Islam had arrived in parts of Indonesia as early as the seventh century, and the second view believes that Islam came to the archipelago only in the thirteenth century when evidence of the first Islamic kingdom was found in Samudra Pasai, Aceh. Indeed, as there are only very few records of Islamisation that survive, it is extremely difficult to draw a definite conclusion on when Islam actually came to Indonesia.

Regardless of their differences, historians generally agree that the progress of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago took place from the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth centuries.[3] They also agree that Islam came to Indonesia by way of trade and spread across the archipelago from established port cities such as Samudra Pasai (Aceh), Malacca, and coastal cities in northern Java.[4] However, differences remain regarding two crucial issues, namely, the area from which Islam came and how Islam succeeded in becoming the majority religion of Indonesia. These two questions have direct relevance to the origins of pluralism within Indonesia's Islamic community for one important reason: they influenced not only the nature of Islamic teachings and Islamic school of law (*mahzab*) practised by local people but also determined the degree of internalisation of Islam within the community as it relates to the local culture.

On the question of area of origin, there are at least three main theories that try to explain where Islam in Indonesia came from. The first theory claims that Islam came directly from Arabia and Egypt where the Shafi'i school of law was dominant.[5] This theory seems to be supported by the account provided by the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta that, on his way to and from China in 1345 and 1346, he found the ruler in Samudra Pasai was a follower of the Shafi'i school of law. As Ricklefs notes, "this confirms the presence from an early date of the school which was later to dominate Indonesia."[6] The second theory maintains that Islam in Indonesia came from Bangladesh. This theory is based on the assumption that Islam first penetrated Indonesia from the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula.[7] The third theory argues that Islam came to Indonesia through traders from Gujarat in northwest India and Dacca in south India. This theory, as Ricklefs notes, "is suggested by the fact that the tombstone of Malik Ibrahim (d. 1419) at Gresik and several stones at Pasai are believed to have been imported from Cambay in Gujerat."[8]

Indeed, as "it seems improbable that the Islamisation of Indonesia can be explained with reference to only one source,"[9] it is likely that Islam came to different parts of Indonesia by traders and travellers from the three areas at different times. This is evident from the fact that historical accounts about

the presence of Muslim settlers in various parts of Indonesia are often based on the notes of travellers who came to different parts of the archipelago at different times. For example, the theory of the Bangladeshi origin of Islam in Indonesia is based on the account by Tome Pires who visited Pasai in the early sixteenth century.[10] and on a Chinese report in 1282. [11] Meanwhile, those who argued that Islam in Indonesia originated from India derive their theory among other things also from the account by Ibn Battuta[12] who visited Samudra Pasai in 1345 and 1346, and from the account of Marco Polo.

On the question of how Islam succeeded in becoming the majority religion of Indonesia, it is also difficult to come to a definite conclusion on the process of conversion. Similarly, it is difficult to determine who were the main agents of the process of conversion. Historical studies, however, suggest that the conversion took place at least through three main processes and was carried out by several agents. First, there is evidence to suggest that adherents of Islam were found among some members of the upper classes of Javanese society in the 1370s, during the glorious days of a Hindu Kingdom of Majapahit.[13] While this evidence may in fact suggest that the Hindu–Buddhist court tolerated Muslims in its own circles,[14] it has been acknowledged within Indonesia that "Islam is a palace phenomena. The palace served as the centre for Islamic intellectual development under the protection of the ruler."[15] In other words, the palace or the ruling elites, especially in coastal areas, played an important role in spreading Islam.

Second, there is also evidence to suggest that the conversion to Islam by the people in the interior areas was helped by Muslim teachers, preachers (*da'i*), and traders; both foreign and local in origins. The role of Muslims of foreign origin was evident in the case of Islamisation of coastal ports. It has been asserted, for example, that some of the coastal Muslim lords "were not originally Javanese, but rather Muslim Chinese, Indians, Arabs, and Malays who had settled on the coast and established trading states."[16] Moreover, Indonesian ancient texts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often shared an emphasis on the foreign origins and trade connections of the first teachers.[17] Azra also believes that in the process of Islamic penetration to rural areas, "[Muslim] traders and teachers, who were also teachers of Sufism, and their students, played an important role."[18] Indeed, as Ricklefs concludes, "there is sufficient evidence to suggest that foreign Muslims from many areas and Indonesian Muslims themselves all played important roles in various areas at various times."[19]

Third, the spread of Islam was also accelerated by the efforts of Islamic sufi teachers who tolerated the amalgamation between Islam and local culture, with its strong roots in Hindu–Buddhist tradition. This can be seen from the fact that Islam was accepted and adopted in a relatively voluntary way, without conquest or pressure from the ruling elite.[20] One argument for this characteristic of the conversion process is that "the adoption of a new religion would have been no extraordinary matter for the Javanese elite, who had

long been able to adopt various Hindu and Buddhist cults apparently without a sense of conflict."[21] And, the claim to supernatural powers played an important role in the contest for influence among many Javanese rulers during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. In this context, the mystical trait of Javanese Islam is seen as one possible reason why that was the case. It has been argued that "they are [the elite] more likely to have been influenced by learned Muslim mystics and holy men with claims to supernatural power."[22]

This description suggests an important role played by *sufi* teachers in the penetration of Islam into Hindu–Buddhist Javanese courts. As one Indonesian scholar has noted, "the Sufi's way of thinking was not different from the old religion which acknowledged the primacy of holy men or *wali* (apostles) with their magical power or charm (*azimat*)."[23] More importantly, many *sufi* teachers also used the local tradition and customs as vehicles by which the message of the new religion could be transmitted to the wider population where the Hindu–Buddhist tradition had already been strongly rooted in the society. It was this method of Islamisation that partly served as the basis for the emergence of Islam with a tradition of high religious tolerance and accommodation towards local culture and custom.

The methods by which Islam spread throughout Indonesia, especially in Java, later shaped the nature of Indonesian Islam and its relationship with politics and the state. From historical accounts on the spread of Islam in Indonesia, there are four important characteristics of the earlier Islamisation process that brought about significant impacts not only on the place of Islam in court politics and within the society, but also on state-identity formation during the period of struggle for independence and beyond. In fact, as Islamisation itself is still an ongoing process even until the present day, Islam in Indonesia continues to evolve with its attendant consequences for political and social change in the country. The four characteristics of Islamisation process are the place of Islam in Javanese courts, the blending of Islam with older Hindu–Buddhist–Javanese traditions, differences between coastal and interior Islam and Javanese and non-Javanese Islam, and the uneven impact of Islam in the archipelago.

First, the earlier form of Islam as practised in Javanese courts, which incorporated the older tradition of Hindu–Buddhism that it replaced, served an important political function for the ruling elite. The acceptance of Islam by rulers of Javanese courts cannot be separated from elements of mysticism embedded in the teachings of *sufi* teachers or apostles, which was also partly in harmony with local Hindu–Buddhist tradition. It has been argued, for example, that "for the Central Javanese courts, Islam and religion generally may have been primarily a source of supernatural energy."[27] In that context, Islam did serve as an important aspect of the politics of regime legitimation for the rulers.[25] Islamic Javanese kings, such as Sultan Agung of Mataram Kingdom (1613–1645), played an important role in encouraging the propagation of Islam within their kingdoms.[26] However, it has been noted also

that in these kingdoms, "many older traditions were incorporated into Islam."[27] Indeed, the political utility of religion for Javanese rulers may not be too different from that of the pre-Islamic era when "high religion . . . was closely tied to dynastic politics and legitimization."[28]

Indeed, while the Javanese rulers could not disregard the importance of religion in their quest for moral and political authority, the introduction of Islam did little to change the nature of the state and basic political order that had developed in early periods.[29] A political structure that began with and was dominated by a *raja* with absolute power and authority remained intact. The state continued to take the form of a monarchy. This was the main feature of the Mataram Kingdom (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries). The king was no longer seen as a god-king; that doctrine was replaced with the concept of agung *binathara* (noble as god).[30] In the eighteenth century, it became customary for kings of Mataram to add the title *Kalipatullah* (an Arabic term "representative of God on earth").

Like their predecessors, Javanese kings during the Mataram period also assumed glorious titles that signified their primacy within the state. The fifth ruler of Mataram, Sultan Agung, assumed the title *Sultan Agung Senopati Ing Alogo Ngabdurrahman Sayidin Panotogomo*, which expressed the quality and status of the king as head of state, commander of the armed forces, and religious leader.[31] Islamic Javanese kings also bore the title *Susuhunan*, which reflected the influence of the Hindu–Javanese period.[32] Indeed, a leading Indonesian historian noted that "the civilization that flourished in the Central Javanese court of Pajang, and subsequently of Mataram, during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, still preserved many elements of the earlier Hindu–Buddhist–Javanese tradition."[33]

Second, the spread of Islam in Indonesia, in addition to the influence of Indian Islam, was also related to Sufism, mysticism, and the amalgamation of Islam with local culture and tradition of a strong Hindu–Buddhist flavour. It has been acknowledged within Indonesia that "Islam came to Indonesia partly from India, where Islam cannot be separated from the influence of Hinduism. The amalgamation of Islam with elements of Hinduism made it easier for the spread of Islam among the Indonesian society, especially among Javanese, because they were already familiar with Hinduism."[34] The mystical aspect of Sufism also allowed the process of Islamisation to coexist alongside the traditional belief and culture. Some scholars even argued that the process was more a Javanisation of Sufism than vice versa.[35] It is this quality that gave birth to a form of Islam which tended to accommodate traditional values and customs, even though they might not be in line with the ideal standards of Islamic practices.[36]

Third, there was an identifiable distinction between Islam in coastal areas and Islam that evolved in interior areas on the one hand, and between Islam in Java and outside Java on the other. Ricklefs, for example, noted that "the introduction of Islam brought few important changes to the religious life of

the interior of Java"[37] and "the Javanese Muslims of the coast have on the whole been more self-consciously Muslim than those of the interior."[38] It has been noted also that "though urban and peasant systems represent points of a continuum rather than mutually exclusive and alternative ways of life, the peasant end of the continuum is less likely to be intensely Islamic and more likely to reveal different levels of ideological tincture than the urban end."[39] On differences between Javanese and non-Javanese Islam, Hefner noted that "in other parts of what would eventually become Indonesia, such as coastal Sumatra, coastal Borneo, and several of the eastern islands involved in the spice trade, local culture appears early on to have been more decisively Islamized."[40] In other words, Islam outside Java, especially in Aceh, appeared to have emulated a purer form of Islam, perhaps due to intensive contacts and trade with the Middle East.

Fourth, Islam did not penetrate the whole Indonesian archipelago. Large areas of eastern Indonesia, upland Sumatera and interior Kalimantan managed to preserve their indigenous religions. In the sixteenth century, large parts of these areas became Christianised when the Portuguese introduced Catholicism to the local population,[41] and then in the seventeenth century Protestantism was introduced by the Dutch. The island of Bali also managed to preserve its identity as a determined Hindu community until the present day. Other areas simply kept their indigenous belief system, primarily in the form of animism, such as in large parts of what would later become Irian Province of Indonesia. And, when the stricter interpretation of Islam began to take firmer root in the archipelago from the eighteenth century onwards, with a strong influence on state affairs, these areas remained less affected. The result was a religious diversity in which Islam grew in coexistence with other major world religions.

Diversity within Indonesia's Islamic community

The four characteristics of the Islamisation process in Indonesia discussed above produced a uniquely Indonesian brand of Islam in which pluralism constitutes a major characteristic of the Islamic community itself within an already diverse society. In its earlier form until the nineteenth century, however, Islam in Indonesia, especially in Java, shared a common peculiarity in terms of the dominant feature of its tolerance and incorporation of older Hindu–Buddhist–Javanese traditions. During the initial stages of Islamisation, this feature served as an important vehicle for the introduction of Islam itself. However, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a serious challenge to this type of Islam began to emerge as the influence of Islamic reformism/modernism in Egypt began to reach Indonesia. The rise of the Islamic reform movement in Indonesia served as an important context for the divergence of Indonesia's Muslims into two religious mainstreams: the traditionalist and the modernists. And, that divide was, and still is, manifested

in the forms of the two largest mass Islamic organisations in Indonesia, namely, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

As the winds of Islamic reform in the Middle East reached Indonesia by the end of the nineteenth century, increasing numbers of Indonesian Muslims began to question the adequacy of traditional versions of Islam in the face of modernity. In Java, this was more evident among the urban Muslim community where life had been affected by the economic changes of the late nineteenth century. These Muslims, who were involved in trade and small industries in towns like Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and Kudus, began to feel the need for "a new image of the world and their place in it."[42] Reform Islam provided such a new image, exemplified by its intention to "return to what it called the fundamental truths of the Koran, discarding both the accretions of medieval scholasticism and the compromise with local animism, thus clearing the way for a thoroughgoing modernisation of Islam."[43] The new Islam offered "a way to become modern while remaining Muslim."[44] This message of the new Islam spread very quickly, first in Minangkabau in West Sumatera and soon in Java, and brought profound consequences for the Islamic community.

The first modern organisation of Reform Islam, Muhammadiyah, was established in Yogyakarta in 1912 under the influence of the Islamic reformism of Mohammad Abduh (1849–1905) in the Middle East.[45] As a modernist movement, Muhammadiyah seeks to purify Islam against *bid'ah* (heresy) and *khurafat* (myths) often practised by Indonesian Muslims. It also embarked upon a *tajdid* movement that meant renewal, innovation, restoration, and modernisation.[46] Due to its nature as a specifically Muslim organisation, not a Javanese one, Muhammadiyah soon developed branches in the non-Javanese areas of the archipelago, in Sumatera, and elsewhere.[47] In the course of less than fifteen years, for example, Muhammadiyah managed to open 51 branches by 1926, and by June 1933 it listed 557 branches and groups in the whole archipelago.[48] This impressive organisational development was also followed by tangible achievements from the movement's efforts to expand its activities in religious, social, and educational fields through an extensive network of youth and women's associations, clinics, orphanages, and a large and modern school system.[49]

The emergence of Muhammadiyah as a modernist Islamic movement, especially due to the movement's agenda to purify and reform Islam in Indonesia, was soon regarded as a threat to the existing traditional Islamic belief by conservative and traditional *ulamas*, especially in rural Java. For these traditional *ulamas*, the modernist's concern to reconcile Islam with modernity "was an implied rejection of the eternal truth embodied in the teachings of the great scholars of classical Islam."[50] In 1926, the traditionalists felt that there was a need for a united response to the modernist challenge. And, the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926 served as a conservative reaction to the growing influence of the reform movement. It sought to protect

the existing way of life – a blend of Islam and Javanese cultural traditions – and rejected both the purifying and the modernising aspirations of the reformers. The NU also represented the religious interests of traditional and rural Javanese Muslims.

The NU and the *kiyais* (religious teachers) within it, however, were not unwilling to change and reform. Indeed, they quietly implemented reforms of their own. For example, the "traditional religious schools renewed their curricula by replacing most of the Malay and Javanese writings on which they had long relied with texts of recognized Middle Eastern origin."[51] Secular topics began to be included in traditional religious schools. Muhammadiyah, however, continued to be seen as a movement whose rapid development posed a challenge to the traditional Islamic community. Even though the gap in points of religious disagreements after the bitter enmity of the 1920s and 1930s had gradually narrowed, the division within the Islamic community along this traditional–modernist divide remained and it continued to serve as an obstacle to sustained cooperation among the co-religionists.[52] Even until today, elements of differences continue to be visible between these two largest Islamic organisations in Indonesia.

The diversity within Indonesia's Islamic community was not only exemplified by the traditionalist–modernist divide, however. Among the academic community, especially among Indonesianists, it has become fashionable to distinguish Islam in Indonesia into two main groups: the *santri* (devout Muslim) and the *abangan* (nominal Muslim).[53] Within this category, the NU and Muhammadiyah represent a division within the *santri* community. It is important to note, however, that while such classifications are useful for analysis, accepting them at face value as unchanging social phenomena is fraught with risk. They are of course amenable to change over time. For example, one scholar argues that with tremendous changes in Indonesia society in the past three decades "the applicability of *santri/abangan* distinctions for understanding Islamic and/or national politics is increasingly less relevant today."[54] Moreover, it has been noted that "historians are likely to conclude that one of the New Order's primary social achievements has been the suppression of the primordial *santri/abangan* conflict."[55]

Such categorisation, however, appeared to have been useful in identifying the presence of a third group within the Islamic community as it relates to politics and ideology, namely, the secular Muslims. This group advocated deconfessional politics, if not secular nationalism, rather than religious politics as the platform for national struggle for independence. While it has been noted that "secular nationalism was particularly influential among Muslim members of the largest ethnic group, the Javanese,"[56] its appeal as an ideology of the independence movement was not limited to Javanese only. When a group of students led by Sukarno formed Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI) in 1928, it soon attracted substantial support from secular Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Indeed, the PNI represented "the first major political party

in which the membership was ethnically Indonesian, the goal was simply political independence, the territorial vision encompassed the present boundaries of Indonesia, and the ideology was 'secular' nationalism."[57] Within the Indonesian context, this group is also known as *kebangsaan* group (nationalist group).[58]

As the drive toward independence grew stronger, the notion of an Indonesian unity soon gained much currency among hitherto diverse political and religious groupings in Indonesian society. Some sort of a united front, with an all-Indonesian nationalism as a common denominator, became imperative. Faced with the superiority of the colonial administration, nationalist leaders recognised the weakness of divided action and came to the conclusion that independence could only succeed if all Indonesians were united in their cause. Islamic political organisations such as Partai Sarekat Islam,[59] secular and Javanese-centric organisations such as Budi Utomo, ethnic and regional groupings, and Christian organisations joined with the PNI in a body known as PPPKI (*Permufakatan Perhimpunan-perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia*, Agreement of Indonesian People's Political Associations). The unity of this association, however, soon proved to be short-lived and superficial as real differences of aims and ideologies still divided the movements.

The Partai Sarekat Islam (which changed its name to Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia, PSII, in 1929) withdrew from the body in 1930 due to the refusal of other groups to give Islam "the recognition that the urban Islamic leaders thought it deserved."[60] The secular nationalist leaders strongly maintained that religion and the state should be separated, an idea that could not be accepted by Islamic leaders. Within the *santri* community itself, differences remained as the NU leaders found it unacceptable that the urban PSII continued to stress modernist ideas.61 Indeed, differences and extreme diversity within the Islamic community – both between Islamic-oriented *santri* and secular-nationalist Muslims on the one hand and between the modernist and traditionalist Islam on the other – later posed a formidable challenge to the founders of the Republic of Indonesia in their attempt to define the identity of the new independent state.

Islam, state formation, and the politics of compromise: the origins of dual identity

When Dutch administration in Indonesia was ended by the Japanese army in March 1942, nationalist leaders faced another battle in their road towards independence. The invading Japanese, who were initially hailed as liberators, soon became another stumbling block to Indonesia's embryonic independence movement.[62] As the war turned in favour of the Allies, however, the Japanese planned to grant Indonesia a puppet independence, which they had already granted to Burma and the Philippines, with the object of hampering the Allied advance. This provided an opportunity for Indonesian nationalists, under the

leadership of Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta, to initiate the process of independence from May 1945, "hoping to hold independence in their hands before the expected Allied victory."[63] For such purpose, an Investigating Body for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence (*Badan Penyelidik Usaha-Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia*, BPUPKI) was formed under Japanese auspices with sixty-two members.

As the Japanese left the agenda open, members of the BPUPKI took the opportunity to lay down basic ideological, legal, and political foundations upon which an independent Indonesia state would be based. From late May to mid-August 1945, they "preceded, with remarkable unanimity, to draw up a constitution covering such issues as the territory to be included, citizenship qualifications, religion, and the political structure of the new state."[64] More importantly, they also debated the ideological and constitutional basis of the state, in which the question of the relationship between Islam and the state was the most crucial issue. As independence was within reach, a conclusion to this issue was indeed pressing. It was during this significant moment that Indonesian leaders in the BPUPKI encountered the difficult problem of defining the identity of the prospective state: whether or not Islam should be the basis of state identity. The debate in the BPUPKI on this issue finally ended with the affirmation of dual identity, which defined Indonesia as neither secular nor theocratic, but a *Pancasila* state.

The road towards compromise: the formalisation of dual identity

The debate in the BPUPKI (which later became the PPKI, *Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* or Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence, with twenty-one members) was nothing but a revival of the earlier debate on Islam–state relations that had already ensued between *kebangsaan* and Islamic groups throughout the 1930s and early 1940s.[65] For the *kebangsaan* group, which was primarily represented by Sukarno, the identity of an independent Indonesian state should not be defined in terms of any religion. He argued that "reality shows us, that the principle of the unity of state and religion for a country which its inhabitant is not 100% Muslim could not be in line with democracy."[66] For Sukarno, "the notion of an Islamic state was no more than a recent formulation by Muslim scholars and intellectuals without strong foundation from Islamic teachings. Therefore, there is no obligation [for Muslims] to establish an Islamic state."[67] In that context, Sukarno concluded that "Islam in Indonesia should not become the affair of the state."[68]

The Islamic group, represented by Mohammad Natsir, rejected Sukarno's notion of an Indonesian state which sought to separate Islam from the state. For him, Islam was more than just a system of theology, but a complete civilisation comprised of general principles which regulates the interaction

among individuals and between individual and society. Natsir also contended that "to make those [Islamic] regulations and directives operative and functional in a manner they are supposed to be, there should and must be a power in a living relationship known as the state."[69] In Natsir's view, the idea of unity between religion and the state was imperative. In that context, Natsir maintained that "in principle, the affairs of the state are an integral part ('*intergreerend deel*') of Islam."[70] In other words, the Islamic group was of the view that Islam should form the basis of the Indonesian state.

It was such competing religio-ideological positions between the two groups that re-emerged when the BPUPKI held a session in late May 1945 to discuss a constitution. Islamic leaders naturally wanted an independent Indonesia to be defined in terms of Islam and pressed for an explicit recognition of Islam in the constitution. They demanded that "Indonesia should become an Islamic state, or that Islam should become the ideological basis of the state."[71] The *kebangsaan* group, on the other hand, reiterated their earlier position that in an independent Indonesian state, the affairs of the state should be separated from affairs of religion. Supomo, for example, maintained that "if an Islamic state is created in Indonesia, then certainly the problem of minorities will arise, the problem of small religious groups, of Christians and others."[72] As both groups seemed unwilling to compromise, a small *Panitia Sembilan* (committee of nine) was set up to resolve the issue.[73]

In mid-July 1945, a compromise was finally achieved. The *Panitia Sembilan* agreed that the Indonesian state would be based on the *Pancasila*; an ideological formula offered earlier by Sukarno in his speech before the BPUPKI on 1 June 1945. In the speech Sukarno tried to consolidate his notion of a deconfessionalised state by proposing that an independent Indonesian state should be based on five principles: *kebangsaan* (nationalism), *internationalisme* or *peri-kemanusiaan* (internationalism or humanism), *mufakat* or *demokrasi* (consultation and consensus), *kesejehteraan sosial* (social wefare), and *Ketuhanan* (belief in one God). The *Panitia Sembilan* had on 22 June agreed to accept *Pancasila*, albeit in a different order and wordings,[74] as the basis of the state and to be included into the preamble of the new constitution, but with the inclusion of "with the obligation to carry out the *shariah* for the adherents of Islam" after the first principle of "Belief in God." This compromise, known as the Djakarta Charter, was then officially accepted as a "gentlemen's agreement" between *kebangsaan* and Islamic groups. During the subsequent meeting on 16 July, the BPUPKI also agreed that the President of Indonesia must be a Muslim.[75]

With that agreement, Indonesia's independence was proclaimed by Sukarno and Hatta on the morning of 17 August 1945. However, the "gentlemen's agreement" became void on 18 August when Hatta announced to the PPKI that due to reservations expressed by Protestant and Catholic leaders, the *shariah* clause was removed from both the preamble and the body of the constitution, along with the provision that the president must be a Muslim.

The religious content of state identity was expressed in the first principle of *Pancasila* simply as "Belief in One God." Hatta argued that such changes were necessary in order to "create a unity of the nation" and to make it "acceptable to non-Islamic areas of the country."[76] The decision caught many Muslim leaders by surprise. With the promulgation of the 1945 Constitution on 18 August, the identity of the newly proclaimed Indonesia as "neither theocratic nor secular" was formalised. As the Islamic leaders now felt betrayed, the question of state identity was to re-emerge again in the post-independence era.

Post-independence debate and the perseverance of dual identity

Indeed, the question of state identity was not necessarily resolved with the declaration of independence and the adoption of the 1945 Constitution. As mentioned earlier, many Islamic leaders felt betrayed by the decision of the PPKI, in which the Islamic group was poorly represented, to drop the Djakarta Charter. However, they did not immediately challenge the decision for three main reasons. First, as Indonesia's independence had already been proclaimed one day earlier, the need to adopt a constitution became a matter of paramount urgency. Second, as the 1945 Constitution was meant only as a provisional constitution, there would be a chance for Islamic leaders to raise the matter when a new constitution was drafted.[77] Third, after the declaration of independence, concerns over the place of Islam in relation to the identity of the new state was soon overshadowed by the national struggle to resist the returning Dutch, who attempted to restore colonial administration in Indonesia.[78]

Indeed, from 1945 to 1949, Indonesian leaders were engaged in a national revolution to defend independence. During this period, both *kebangsaan* and Islamic groups "were able to develop a relatively harmonious political relationship."[79] Leaders of the Islamic group were also aware that "the day of the revolution were [sic] not the appropriate time (for the Islamic Nationalists) to press on with realization of their Islamic ideas."[80] The urgency to defend the independence of the Republic seemed to have put the debate on state identity to rest. The struggle was finally brought to an end with the transfer of sovereignty by the Dutch in December 1949. Indonesia finally joined the international community as an independent and sovereign state.

The transfer of sovereignty and international recognition, however, did not immediately revive the debate on the state identity. In fact, there was evidence that key leaders of the Islamic group, such as Natsir, already accepted that the adoption of *Pancasila* as the state ideology did not amount to the separation of Islam and the state. In his address to the Pakistan Institute of World Affairs in 1952, for example, Natsir maintained that with the adoption of *Pancasila*, which recognised Belief in One God as its first principle, Indonesia has not excluded religion from statehood.[81] Moreover, there was

a strong conviction among Islamic leaders that the question of state identity could be discussed again in an elected Constituent Assembly. Indeed, it was Sukarno himself who promised back in August 1945 that "we will draft a new, more perfect constitution after the situation became more stable."[82] In June 1945, he had also promised that "whatever is not yet satisfactory, we shall talk over in a *permusjawaratan*. The Representative Body-this is our place for bringing forward the demands of Islam!"[83] As Sukarno's words were strongly held as a "national promise" by a national leader,[84] the Islamic group was willing to wait until such an election came.

The political atmosphere suddenly changed in January 1953 when President Sukarno, whom the Islamic group expected to stay neutral, publicly sided with the *kebangsaan* position and rejected Islam as the basis of the state. He declared that "the state we are building and want is a national state consisting of all Indonesia. If we establish a state based on Islam, many areas whose population is not Muslim will secede."[85] Sukarno's remarks immediately attracted strong responses from Islamic leaders. They criticised Sukarno for taking sides with "a group of people who disagree with Islamic ideology," being "undemocratic and unconstitutional," "challenging the ideology of Islam," and "sowing the seeds of separatism."[86] They also maintained that the question of the basis of the state should be decided by the Constituent Assembly in a democratic manner, not by the President. When the chorus of criticisms by the Islamic group was followed by strong defence of Sukarno's view by the *kebangsaan* group, the old ideological divide between the two groups was revived.

The Constituent Assembly (*Konstituante*) was formed following the general elections in September 1955, in which the Islamic political parties controlled only 43.5 per cent of the seats. Its main task was to draft a new constitution. The Islamic group sought to reopen the question of the Djakarta Charter. The debate on this issue delayed the completion of the new constitution and, in 1959, the whole undertaking was brought to an end when President Sukarno dissolved the *Konstituante* and declared the introduction of Guided Democracy based on the earlier 1945 Constitution. Through this undemocratic act, Sukarno managed to impose the non-religious identity of the Indonesian state. However, a sense of dual identity remained when Sukarno was also obliged to satisfy the Muslim community by stating that the Djakarta Charter "inspires the 1945 Constitution and comprises a framework of unity with the constitution."[87] The episode left a bitter feeling among Islamic leaders, and its impacts on the relationship between Islam and the state persisted for many decades to come.

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter reveals that pluralism is a dominant feature of Indonesia's Islam. Islam is neither a monolithic community nor a single

political entity. A leading Islamic intellectual, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, for example, acknowledged that "Indonesia's Islam is not an '*ummatan wahidah*' (a united/one community) – as described by the Qur'an – but an *ummat* that 'you think they are united while in fact their hearts are divided.' History of Islam in Indonesia is a history of an *ummat* that always tries to unite in order to break up." He also points out that differences within *umat Islam* is often defined in terms of "differences along political, cultural, and *fiqh* (interpretation of Islamic laws) lines, which brought about such categorisations as traditionalist, modernist, and fundamentalist" and between those who sought "the Islamisation of Indonesia" and those who want to "Indonesianise Islam."[88] In other words, Rakhmat acknowledges that there is no agreement among Indonesian Muslims on how to define *Umat Islam*.[89] When ideology and politics are brought into the equation, the dividing line between *kebangsaan* (secular nationalist) and Islam was, and still is, evident within the Muslim community.

Within such context, defining the place of Islam in post-colonial Indonesian politics has never been an easy task. The role of Islam in Indonesian politics has always been a matter of ambiguity. Although approximately 90 per cent of its population are Muslims in one sense or another, the state of Indonesia is not defined in terms of its majority religion. It is claimed that "Indonesia is not a secular state, neither is it a theocratic one . . . . Some countries lie somewhere between the two categories . . . and Indonesia is one of them."[90] Instead, spokesmen of the state tend to define Indonesia as a religious country in which freedom for adherents of any religion to practise their respective religious teachings is guaranteed and even encouraged by the state.

Such compromise, however, does not necessarily mean that the problem of state identity has been resolved. The debate on the nature of the state and the place of religion in it, from the very beginning of state-formation process and beyond, reflected the dilemma of identity in Indonesia. On the one hand, the majority of its population are Muslims. This reality cannot be ignored by the state, because Islam does serve as a source of values and norms which guide the behaviour and life of the society. Islam has also been central to social and political legitimisation within the society. On the other hand, there is the reality of ethnic and cultural pluralism and the presence of other religions serves as an important constraint which requires the government not to define the state in terms of any religion, because such a theocratic identity would contradict the ideals of Indonesia's unity as a nation. Therefore, any government in Indonesia is obliged to move beyond strict secularism by taking into account Muslim aspirations but short of moving towards the establishment of an Islamic state. This complex political reality requires a delicate management of state affairs. And, that delicate management of dual identity dilemma is also extended to the field of foreign policy.

3 Islam in Sukarno's foreign policy (1945–1966)

This chapter discusses the place of Islam in Indonesian foreign policy from the formative years of the Republic until the demise of Sukarno's rule in 1966. In doing so, the role of the Islamic factor is examined in terms of three crucial phases in Indonesian domestic developments that affected the course of foreign policy: the period of state formation, parliamentary democracy, and the Guided Democracy. By examining the course of Indonesian foreign policy during the three periods, this chapter seeks to explain why Islam was conspicuously absent in foreign policy considerations. It also demonstrates how, from the very beginning, Indonesian foreign policy has been defined not by religious considerations, but by the overriding domestic concerns of successive governments to preserve national unity, secure international legality, attain regime legitimacy and security, and strengthen domestic political ascendancy.

The discussion in this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the domestic origins of Indonesian foreign policy and Indonesia's earlier relations with the Islamic world. The second section examines the nature and conduct of foreign policy during the period of parliamentary democracy and the place of Islam in it. The third section locates the place of Islam in the radicalisation of foreign policy during the later years of Sukarno's rule. The main objective of this chapter, however, is to provide a perspective on the relative absence of Islam in the general conduct of foreign policy and diplomacy.

The domestic roots of Indonesian foreign policy[1]

Indonesian foreign policy, like elsewhere, began at home. It emerged from the country's experience in the national struggle for independence. As in many post-colonial states, the initial shape of foreign policy in Indonesia was also dictated by domestic predicaments of state-formation process. In such circumstances, two domestic concerns were of paramount significance for Indonesian foreign policy. First, in the context of divisive domestic ideological and political competition, foreign policy of the new state was bound to be

circumscribed by the overriding concerns for national unity. Second, as a post-colonial state, the qualification of Indonesia as a legitimate actor in international society depended upon the recognition of its legal personality and legitimacy by other members of a society of states. In that context, the quest for international recognition constituted the primary function of foreign policy.

The origin of foreign policy: domestic context

After independence was proclaimed in August 1945, the divisions within the elite that had developed in the pre-independence era became more apparent during the revolutionary period.[2] In foreign policy, the rivalry within the Republic's leadership revolved around two significant questions. The first and main line of contention was over how to deal with the Dutch. Successive national revolutionary governments were subject to enormous political pressures while conducting negotiations with the Dutch over the issue of sovereignty. During these negotiations, the government was often obliged to make concessions, but any compromise always aroused strong domestic opposition, which, in turn, led to the fall of cabinets. The third Sjahrir Cabinet formed on 2 October 1946, for example, was forced to resign in June 1947 after being charged with compromising Indonesia's initial negotiating position after concluding the Linggajati Agreement in the previous March.[3] Sjahrir's successor, Amir Sjarifuddin, was also forced to resign in late January 1948 because of his acceptance of the Renville Agreements concluded two weeks earlier. Successive governments were continually subject to attempts by political rivals to undermine their authority.

The second issue that attracted the attention from among the competing elite was the question of defining Indonesia's international identity and position in world politics given the growing antagonism between East and West. Various political groups, which were divided along ideological and political lines, differed also with regard to the international position which Indonesia should take. In this respect, since early 1948, the leftist Popular Democratic Front (*Front Demokrasi Rakyat*, FDR) had demanded that the government side with the Soviet Union.[4] The FDR strongly argued that in the armed struggle against the Dutch, Indonesia should join the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist camp of the Soviet Union. This position was strongly opposed by Islamic groups who saw communism as incompatible with, and antagonistic to, Islam in particular and religion in general.

The pressure from the leftist groups was resisted by the incumbent government under Vice-President Mohammad Hatta, who exercised executive power as prime minister. However, Hatta's rejection was not based on any religious considerations, but stemmed in part from a concern not to alienate the United States (USA). In response to the growing ideological division in domestic politics over the state's international orientation, Hatta sought to formulate

a clear working framework within which the foreign policy of the new Republic should be carried out. Such a framework was outlined in his famous speech entitled *Mendajung Antara Dua Karang* (Rowing Between Two Coral Reefs). One of the prime purposes was to prevent an explosive entanglement of foreign policy and domestic politics. In this speech, made before the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP) on 2 September 1948,[5] Hatta laid down the basic elements of Indonesian foreign policy:

> Have the Indonesian people fighting for their freedom no other course of action open to them than to chose between being pro Russian or pro American? Is there no other position that can be taken in the pursuit of our national ideas? The government is of the opinion that the position to be taken is that Indonesia should not be a passive party in the arena of international politics but that it should be an active agent entitled to determine its own standpoint with the right to fight for its own goal – the goal of a fully independent Indonesia.[6]

This statement by Hatta served as the foundation of the principle of *bebas-aktif* in Indonesia's foreign policy. The politics of *bebas-aktif* as defined by Hatta consisted of four significant premises. First, the conduct of Indonesia's foreign policy should be based on an ideological foundation: the state's philosophy of *Pancasila*. Second, foreign policy should be aimed at safeguarding the national interest as defined by the state's Constitution. Third, the pursuit of national interests would be best served through an independent foreign policy. Fourth, Indonesian foreign policy should be conducted pragmatically, namely, it "should be resolved in the light of its own interests and should be executed in consonance with the situations and facts it has to face."[7]

Such a formulation carried with it two important messages for both external and internal audiences.[8] To the outside world, the *politik bebas-aktif* identified Indonesia's place and position in the international system. It registered the rejection by the Indonesian government of a commitment to either bloc in the rivalry that had developed between the United States and the Soviet Union after the Second World War.[9] It also guaranteed that Indonesia was "not prepared to participate in any third bloc designed to act as a counterpoise to the two giant blocs."[10] To the domestic audience, the "independent-and-active" policy was meant to mitigate domestic rivalries among competing elites.

As Hatta himself argued, a foreign policy that aligned Indonesia with either bloc of great powers would render the primary task of national consolidation more difficult.[11] Therefore, Hatta sought to cultivate national unity by adopting a balanced independent position towards the outside world.[12] It is clear that an independent and active foreign policy was also made "in response to current contention within the leadership of the nationalist movement over

the merits of alignment with the Soviet Union."[13] In other words, Indonesian foreign policy – which defines the country's position within the international community – was formed with the object of preventing the ideological rivalry between the superpowers from aggravating acute political differences among the country's political elite. The question whether Indonesia should identify itself internationally with the Muslim world did not constitute the main line of contention among the political elite. Within that context, it has been noted, "Islam did not exercise a perceptible influence on the international outlook of the Indonesian state."[14]

Indeed, Indonesia's international outlook had been determined more by the reality of post-war international politics rather than by an ideal image of an Islamic view. After the declaration of independence, Indonesian leaders were faced with the reality of post-war international politics marked by the absence of an immediate strong sympathy for the aspirations of colonised peoples for self-determination and independence. In fact, it faced a serious challenge from the colonial master, the Netherlands. Moreover, the declaration of independence did not receive the backing of major powers. It received only ambivalent support from the United States, which assisted the Dutch diplomatically and to a degree militarily. In a United Nations Security Council meeting in 1946 the USA, prompted by Cold War considerations, joined with the colonial powers in blocking a Ukrainian proposal to take up the issue of the role of British troops in Indonesia. At the time, there was strong suspicion among Indonesian nationalists that the presence of the British troops was being used by the Dutch as a vehicle for returning to Indonesia in order to re-colonise the country.[15]

During this period, the Indonesian nationalist movement had to be self-reliant in upholding its claim to independence through a combination of *perjuangan* (struggle) and *diplomasi* (diplomacy). From their experience of *perjuangan*, Indonesia's revolutionary military leaders concluded that *kemerdekaan* (independence) could only be achieved through a *revolusi fisik* (physical revolution) which required personal sacrifice. Such a conviction grew stronger after the Republic had experienced two major Dutch military actions (in July 1947 and December 1948) in attempt to reimpose the colonial administration. In the experience of *diplomasi*, a difficult process of negotiations with the Dutch left the unpleasant impression of involvement in a game being played out by Western powers to delay the recognition of Indonesia's independence. For example, the refusal of the Western powers to order the Dutch to withdraw from territory they had occupied by force undermined the initial expectations of Indonesian leaders that the West, especially the USA, would favour national self-determination for colonial peoples. Later American pressure on the Dutch to this end did not erase this first impression.[16] It was widely believed that ultimate recognition by the Netherlands was far more the result of Indonesian resistance than of international pressure.

The experience derived during this period, especially from the conduct of *diplomasi*, was also important in that it had a significant bearing on the formation of Indonesia's early image of the nature of the contemporary world after the Second World War. For most nationalist leaders and others involved in the revolutionary struggle, the major Western powers' ambivalent attitude towards Indonesia's Revolution reinforced the already widely held belief that their interests coincided closely with those of the colonial Dutch. The reluctance on the part of Western powers to acknowledge Indonesia's independence reinforced a strong feeling of anti-colonialism within the Republic.[17] In this context, Indonesia's tendency to display strong support to the cause of the colonised world in their struggle for independence – including in the Arab–Muslim world – was a direct manifestation of that feeling.

Looking to the Middle East: in search of international recognition

Islam, however, was not without any positive imprint in the conduct of foreign policy in the early years of the Republic. Indeed, the importance of Islam in foreign policy found its initial expression in Indonesia's attempt to gain as much international support as possible to the cause of the embattled Republic. In this regard, the first federal RUSI (Republic of the United States of Indonesia) cabinet under Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta actively began to seek diplomatic relations with other states. And, in the absence of clear support from major powers, Indonesia turned to the Middle East for recognition. The task of seeking support for and recognition of Indonesia's independence from Middle East countries was given to Agus Salim, a well-known leader of the Islam political group. In April 1947, he made a goodwill trip to the region. On 10 June, a Treaty of Friendship was formally concluded between Indonesia and Egypt. The Treaty clearly signified a *de jure* recognition of the Republic of Indonesia by the Egyptian government, making it the first country that recognised Indonesia's independence.[18] Other Arab states also soon extended their recognition: Lebanon on 29 June 1947, Syria on 2 July 1947, Saudi Arabia on 24 November 1947, and Yemen on 5 May 1948.[19]

The co-religionist factor might have played a contributing role in persuading Arab governments to extend their diplomatic support to Indonesia. An Egyptian special envoy to Indonesia in March 1947, for example, stated that "It is the Islamic brotherhood that gave rise to the support for the struggle of the Indonesian people. The spirit of Islam tells us to oppose all forms of colonialism which in essence is a practice of slavery."[20] When he received Indonesia's "diplomatic mission" to Egypt in April 1947, Egyptian Prime Minister Nokrashi Pasha also maintained that "as a state based on Islam, there is no other choice [for Egypt] but to support the struggle of the Indonesian people who are also Muslim."[21] At the time when the Dutch were trying to isolate Indonesia, the support and recognition from Arab states clearly served

as a reminder to the international community of the existence of a newly independent state called the Republic of Indonesia.

The recognition of independence from Arab countries was a crucial factor that favoured Indonesia's position during the debate at the United Nations Security Council in August 1947 on the Indonesian question following the first Dutch military aggression against the Republic on 17 July that year. During the meeting, the Dutch representative N. Van Kleffens tried to block the right of the UN to intervene in the dispute between the Dutch and the Indonesian government based on the argument that Indonesia's independence had not been recognised by any state. The argument was rejected due to the fact that Egypt, Syria, and Iraq had all extended their recognition.[22] Support was also extended by Arab states to Indonesia after the Dutch launched their second military aggression in December 1948. The military action generated a wave of shock among circles of the United Nations and in the Arab and Asian countries. Some Arab countries responded by closing their ports and airfields to Dutch ships and planes.[23]

It should be pointed out, however, that Indonesia's overture to the Middle East was not meant to provide the foundations for a foreign policy based on co-religionist (Islam) considerations. It was only "part of a general diplomatic strategy designed to secure recognition and international endorsement for the embattled Republic."[24] Such recognition was also actively sought from non-Islamic countries. India, for example, was given a priority in the undertaking and played a major role in supporting Indonesia's struggle for independence. Indeed, after the attainment of independence in December 1949, there was no evidence of Islamic strain in foreign policy. Hatta's seminal statement before the KNIP served as a defining framework and sacred reference for foreign policy of successive governments during the period of parliamentary democracy (1950–1957).

Islam and foreign policy under parliamentary democracy (1950–1957)

During the parliamentary period, Indonesian foreign policy was not expressed in terms of Islamic language. Nor did it reflect an Islamic agenda. Even when governments were led by Islamic leaders of the largest Islamic party Masjumi, the expression of Islam and Islamic interests in foreign policy was conspicuously absent. Indeed, beyond the Republic's attempt at securing international recognition of its independence, Islam did not constitute an obvious element of the foreign policy agenda. Islam, for example, was not mentioned in the foreign policy programme of the Masjumi party. The party only sought to "demand an immediate acceptance of the United States of Indonesia as a member of the United Nations Organisation; restructure Indonesia's representative offices abroad and assign skilled and capable officials; and work to strengthen efforts at maintaining world peace."[25]

The Masjumi party was given the mandate to form a government after the re-establishment of the unitary state in August 1950. The party's leader, Mohammad Natsir, succeeded Hatta as Prime Minister in September 1950. Despite Masjumi's formal position in favour of an Islamic state, the Cabinet's foreign policy did not express any inclination to pursue an exclusive Islamic agenda and interests. In fact, the foreign policy agenda and outlook of the Natsir Cabinet was almost identical to that of Hatta.[26] On 21 September, Natsir confirmed the necessity for Indonesia to continue the course of an independent foreign policy. Natsir declared that "by mentioning its foreign policy of independence, the government can actively contribute in the attempt to achieve the ideals of humanity."[27] In such an undertaking, however, "the interests of the people will always be the primary objective, and the government will always try to support every effort to preserve world peace."[28]

Another Masjumi-led cabinet, the Sukiman Cabinet which came to power in May 1951 after the resignation of Natsir, also confirmed that "our foreign policy will continue to be based on Pancasila, the nation's way of life that seeks to realise world peace." The Sukiman government was also obliged to define foreign policy in the context of growing confrontation between the USA and the Soviet Union when he stated that "rather than involve itself in the tension [between the two] . . . the government will instead work actively to reduce the tension."[29] Both Natsir and Sukiman defined the foreign policy of their respective governments in terms of universal concerns over the emergence of the Cold War on the one hand and the imperative of domestic interests on the other. In other words, rather than promoting a particular Islamic worldview that defined the world in terms of the division between the community of believers (*ummah*) and non-believers, both Natsir and Sukiman saw the world in terms of ideological rivalry between American-led liberalism and Soviet-led communism.

Indeed, during the parliamentary period, foreign policy issues were subject to intense domestic contention not in ideological terms but more as a manifestation of competition over political power. The issue of the place of Islam in foreign policy was hardly discussed. More importantly, foreign policy as such continued to be dictated by the primacy of domestic priorities, of which the recovery of West Irian constituted the most important domestic and foreign policy issue. Every government during this period was obliged to make the West Irian problem a top national priority.[30] The question of West Irian had remained an unresolved problem between Indonesia and the Netherlands since the transfer of sovereignty in December 1949. Both parties only agreed that one year after the transfer of sovereignty, the issue would be solved through negotiation. However, as the Dutch position became increasingly uncooperative and inflexible, the West Irian problem soon became a foreign policy issue with serious domestic implications.[31]

In general terms, the foreign policies of Masjumi-led cabinets, both under Prime Minister Natsir and even more so during the tenure of the Sukiman

Cabinet, can be described as "pro-West neutralist." Indeed, as Feith observes, Indonesian foreign policy during the early 1950s took a pragmatic form, where comments on global politics were mildly expressed and involved no anti-Western tones.[32] One observer even commented that "even when a Masyumi leader was prime minister, his foreign policy was pro-American."[33] While such an observation constitutes an overstatement and a careless generalisation in the case of the Natsir Cabinet, there was nonetheless evidence to suggest that Indonesia's relations with the USA were warmer under the Sukiman Cabinet. Prime Minister Natsir, for example, rejected the US offer of military assistance in October 1950 for fear of being seen to be too close to the USA and accepted economic and technical assistance only. Within that context, Natsir's foreign policy can be seen as friendly to the USA rather than pro-American.

Unlike Natsir, Sukiman went to the extent of concluding the Mutual Security Act (MSA) in 1951, within which Indonesia, as a recipient country, was obliged to "make a full contribution, consistent with its political and economic capacity, its population, natural resources, facilities and general economic situation, to the development and maintenance of its own defense and *to the defensive strength of the free world*."[34] The nature of the agreement, especially the inclusion of the term "free world," soon brought the Sukiman Cabinet severe criticisms from the opposition at home. It was accused of abandoning independent foreign policy and of bringing Indonesia too close to the US camp. The Masjumi party itself was split on the issue, with former Prime Minister Natsir strongly condemning the action as clear evidence of deviation from the independent foreign policy. As domestic opposition to the MSA was mounting, Prime Minister Sukiman was obliged to tender his resignation in February 1952.[35]

It is not immediately clear why Natsir and Sukiman preferred a warmer relationship with the USA. One explanation is that both Natsir, and especially Sukiman, were strongly anti-communist. Indeed, during the Sukiman government, hundreds of members of PKI were arrested under charges of conspiracy and subversion. Islam might have contributed to the anti-communist stance of Masjumi. The party was, for example, opposed to the proposal during the tenure of Wilopo, who succeeded Sukiman as prime minister, to establish diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union.[36] However, Indonesia's relations with the USA at the time could not be separated from the domestic priority of incorporating West Irian into the Republic. In this regards, the USA was expected to put pressure on the Netherlands to abandon its position on Irian and transfer the territory to Indonesia.[37] In addition to the problem of West Irian, foreign policy of Indonesian governments was also affected by the difficult problem of reconstruction at home. In the event, Western powers, especially the USA, served as a viable source of financial and development assistance. Seen within that context, Islam did not serve as a constraint to Indonesian foreign policy of seeking a warmer relationship with the West.

The Islamic factor and its influence over foreign policy became even less visible after Ali Sastroamidjojo of the secular-nationalist PNI came to power in July 1953. The Ali Cabinet, which excluded the Masjumi party in the coalition and received strong support from the PKI, pledged to adhere to *bebas-aktif* foreign policy. In contrast to the policy of previous cabinets, which had been largely confined to the problems of West Irian and Indonesian–Dutch relations, Prime Minister Ali intended to play a more active role in world affairs.[38] Indeed, the Ali Cabinet began its foreign policy initiative through the internationalisation of the West Irian dispute with the Dutch by placing the issue on the UN agenda in August 1954. The Ali Cabinet also began to display a vehemently anti-colonial view and sought to gain for Indonesia a position of leadership within the anti-colonialist movement of the Third World nations.[39] It was during the tenure of the Ali Cabinet that Indonesia hosted the famous Asia–Africa Conference in April 1955. The non-aligned position of Indonesia was expressed through a significant improvement of relations with the Socialist bloc, especially the Soviet Union.

As Indonesia's relations with the Soviet Union grew warmer, its relations with the USA inevitably became strained. For one reason, Indonesia was increasingly frustrated by the USA's neutral position on the West Irian issue. For its part, Washington closely watched the growing militancy of Ali's policy of anti-colonialism and non-alignment with apprehension and suspicion.[40] In order to display the authentic expression of Indonesia's *bebas-aktif* policy, an agreement to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union was concluded in December 1953. More importantly, Washington's anxiety over the militancy of Ali's foreign policy might have been influenced also by a significant development in Indonesian domestic politics, namely, the growing role of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Under the dynamic leadership of Dipa Nusantara Aidit, the party managed to consolidate itself and was now embarking upon a new strategy of working closely with "national progressive bourgeoisie and national democrats." For that reason, it strongly supported Prime Minister Ali's government, especially in countering "the united opposition in the parliament of the middle-of-the-road parties such as the Masjumi and others."[41]

Within such international and domestic contexts, Indonesian foreign policy was increasingly defined by Ali's enthusiasm to forge a global movement of anti-colonialism among Asian and African countries rather than by other agenda. Indeed, Prime Minister Ali's major achievement in foreign policy, the renowned Asia–Africa Conference in April 1955, was clearly meant to demonstrate this. It also matched the growing anti-colonialism and imperialism rhetoric of the PKI at home. The PKI was also actively advocating that "the people of Indonesia must be oriented towards the Socialist Soviet Union and not towards imperialist America."[42] As non-alignment, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism became the main themes of foreign policy, Indonesia's relations with the Arab–Muslim world were subsumed under that general

framework. Ali's policy of non-recognition of Israel, for example, was not defined in terms of co-religionist solidarity with Arab–Muslim nations.

Achievements in foreign policy did not prevent the fall of the Ali Cabinet however. Ali was succeeded as prime minister by Burhanuddin Harahap of the Masjumi party in August 1955. Like other previous governments, Harahap's cabinet was also a coalition government, this time with the exclusion of the PNI. The foreign policy of this short-lived Masjumi-led government (until March 1956), while reaffirming adherence to the principle of *bebas-aktif*, was dominated by two main issues. First, it took an active interest in the claim to West Irian through negotiation with the Dutch. Second, in relations to the first agenda, it sought to improve relations with Western states with the object of influencing the international climate for dealing with the Dutch. The change in diplomatic style was also meant "to dissipate the misunderstanding which had existed between the US government and Indonesia during the Ali Cabinet and to put the relationship on a friendlier footing."[43] Indeed, the Harahap Cabinet did not have the time and resources to focus on other foreign policy issues due to its nature as a transitional government pending the result of the first general elections scheduled to take place in early 1956.

The results of the general elections, held in September 1955, reflected the nature of Indonesian politics rooted in conflict over ethno-religious identity.[44] With the PNI and the Masjumi sharing almost equal votes, the two parties formed a coalition Cabinet and Ali Sastroamidjojo was once again appointed as prime minister in March 1956. The coalition excluded the PKI despite President Sukarno's request that the party be included because it came fourth in the general elections. However, the fact that Masjumi constituted his primary partner in the government did not prevent the return of Ali's earlier militant foreign policy. Contrary to Masjumi's pragmatic approach to the West, anti-Western sentiment grew significantly during Ali's second term. Indonesia's support to Egypt over the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, which was framed within the general context of anti-colonialism and imperialism rather than in terms of Islamic solidarity, turned violent in Jakarta in November 1956 after the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt. Mob attacks on the British and French embassies in Jakarta were indicative of how strong anti-Western feeling had become. Against such background, a dramatic change in domestic politics, with severe implications for the place of Islam in the political structure and foreign policy, was about to set in.

The excision of Islam from Sukarno's foreign policy under Guided Democracy (1957–1965)

Signs of an imminent major political change in Indonesia began with President Sukarno's growing distaste of political parties which soon developed into his disdain of the entire parliamentary democracy system. As political parties

were locked in intense inter-party struggles that led to the rise and fall of governments within a short period of time, President Sukarno's became an assertive voice that posed a challenge to political parties and the parliamentary system. Indeed, by 1955–1956, Indonesia was beset by political discontent. This was a result partly of the failure of the general elections of 1955 to provide a government with a working majority. President Sukarno himself expressed this discontent in late 1956 when he called for the abolition of political parties and proposed "a new style democracy." The Armed Forces, especially the Army, also shared that discontent for their own reasons. The marginalisation of the Army's role in politics, the weaknesses of the parliamentary system, and the growing influence of the PKI, as shown in the result of the general elections of 1955, strengthened the army officers' conviction that they bore a responsibility to intervene in order to save the nation.[45]

Sukarno's intention to abandon the parliamentary system was spelled out officially on 21 February 1957 when he proposed that Indonesia adopted what he called "guided democracy." The political parties, already weak and discredited, were unable to resist and challenge Sukarno. In the event, his proposal was endorsed strongly by the PNI, the PKI, and the Army, but opposed by major Islamic parties, especially by the Masjumi.[46] Moreover, the resignation of Mohammad Hatta as vice-president of the Republic in 1956 had made it easier for Sukarno to dominate the domestic political process. In March 1957, he appointed himself "citizen Sukarno" and formed an extra-parliamentary, working cabinet headed by Prime Minister Djuanda Kartawidjaja. This Cabinet functioned as a transitional body during which Sukarno began to set up a new political structure as an alternative to parliamentary democracy. With support from the PKI and also from the Army, Sukarno began to undermine the role of political parties further and strengthen his position as president.[47] On 5 July 1959, President Sukarno declared the beginning of Guided Democracy when he revoked the *UUDS 1950* (Provisional Constitution of 1950) and reinstated the *UUD 1945* (1945 Constitution).

Once he had assumed that dominant position, Sukarno fostered a radicalisation of internal policies. In his Independence Day address of 17 August 1959, Sukarno declared that the Indonesian revolution was not yet finished and, therefore, announced that Indonesia would return to *jalan revolusi* (the road of the revolution). He denounced the "excesses" of liberal democracy and introduced various "revolutionary programmes." And, foreign policy assumed a prominent place in Sukarno's Guided Democracy. President Sukarno believed that the radicalisation of internal policies could only be achieved by a parallel radicalisation of foreign policy. In Sukarno's view, the main objectives of the Indonesian revolution – the creation of a unitary state and a just and prosperous society in Indonesia – could not be achieved before the enemies of these objectives had been eradicated. In that context,

President Sukarno perceived imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism as the main enemies, and he declared their destruction as the third objective of the Indonesian revolution.

Indonesia soon emerged as a voice of the extreme left within the non-aligned Afro-Asian movement.[48] Revolution and struggle against international imperialism and neo-colonialism became two central themes in Indonesian foreign policy. Sukarno began a series of anti-colonialism measures. First, foreign policy was aimed at winning sovereignty over West Irian, accomplished in 1962. By January 1963, he moved to oppose the creation of the Malay Federation for what he perceived as an attempt by colonialist power to maintain domination of the region. Albeit ambiguous, Sukarno also launched a project to transform the international order. He envisioned a new world order characterised by the struggle between the Old Established Forces (OLDEFOS) and the New Emerging Forces (NEFOS), which would eventually lead to the destruction of the former and the victory of the latter. He went on to promote what he called the "Jakarta–Phnom Penh–Beijing–Pyongyang Axis." For him, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism could be destroyed by this chain of new emerging forces. Sukarno's opposition to the existing international order culminated in 1965 when Indonesia decided to leave the United Nations; the first country to do so even until today.

In such circumstance, Islamic considerations were conspicuously absent in the conduct of Sukarno's foreign policy. In the case of Sukarno's opposition to the creation of the Malay Federation, for example, religious – and also cultural – affinity between Indonesian and Malay society was not an issue for Sukarno. Such religious affinity did not prevent Sukarno from launching a policy of *konfrontasi* (confrontation) against Malaya. For Sukarno, "Malaysia is a manifestation of neo-colonialism . . . . Malaysia is a product of the brain and efforts of neo-colonialism."[49] When efforts were made to seek a peaceful solution to the problem, President Sukarno justified the initiative in terms of the need to solve the problem between two "Malay nations."[50] When Sukarno intensified his opposition to Malaysia in 1964, by justifying the intrusion into Malaysian territory by Indonesia's "volunteers and guerrillas" before the UN Security Council, his attempt failed miserably when the majority of members of the Security Council, including Morocco, were not persuaded.[51]

Indonesia's relations with the Arab–Muslim world during this period were given hardly any priority. In fact, good relationships fostered during the period of national revolution and parliamentary democracy tended to deteriorate. Sukarno felt disappointed by the absence of forthright support from Arab–Muslim countries to Indonesia's radical foreign policy agenda. For example, Arab countries did not support Indonesia's decision to boycott the Olympic Games held in Tokyo in 1964.[52] Moreover, many Arab countries did not approve of Sukarno's policy of *konfrontasi* against Malaysia. Indonesia was not happy when Arab members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

granted Malaysia observer status in the Second NAM Conference in Cairo despite its initial attempt to exclude all forms of Malaysia's presence in the meeting.[53] More importantly, Indonesia's militant approach in challenging the international order, especially when it was expressed in terms of the idea to replace the UN system with that of a Conference of New Emerging Forces (CONEFO), was not shared by Arab–Muslim countries. Key Arab countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, despite their strong commitment to challenge imperialism and colonialism, preferred a moderate approach in presenting their case.[54] Instead of nurturing support from the Arab–Muslim countries, Indonesia turned to the Communist bloc in its struggle against the West. For example, Sukarno formed a de facto alliance with Communist China; an act that offended many Islamic circles in Indonesia.[55]

The absence of any Islamic consideration in Sukarno's foreign policy reflected the position of Islam in domestic politics on the one hand and the reality of a new power structure of Guided Democracy on the other. As mentioned earlier, the introduction of the Guided Democracy system seriously undermined the role of political parties in Indonesian politics. For the Muslim community in general, and the Masjumi party in particular, it was more than that. Guided Democracy and its political attributes marked the beginning of the marginalisation of political Islam in Indonesian politics. In 1956–1957, the Masjumi strongly opposed Sukarno's proposal to abandon the parliamentary system to no avail. In 1960, President Sukarno banned the party altogether on the charge that it was implicated in a regional-based rebellion, the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI), in the West Sumatera town of Bukit Tinggi in February 1958. With the banning of Masjumi, another big Islamic party, the Nahdlatul Ulama, was left with no choice but to cooperate with Sukarno. Consequently, Islam ceased to be a significant political actor in politics.[56]

The eclipse of Islamic political parties, and indeed the role of Islam as a potent political force, corresponded with the rise of the PKI. In this regards, Cribb and Brown have succinctly explained the rise of the PKI under Guided Democracy.[57] First, the PKI managed to establish itself as an organised and disciplined political party with a strong grass-roots power base and popular support. Second, the party adopted an unusually pragmatic attitude towards state institutions by abandoning violent revolution as a means to seize power. Instead, the PKI worked to penetrate every administrative post at every level. Third, the rise of the PKI was also made possible by Sukarno's personal backing – he needed the PKI's support to realise his radical domestic and international agenda. More importantly, as mentioned earlier, Sukarno saw the PKI as a potential balancer to the military. The rise of the PKI was clearly a political blow to the Islamic community who opposed any prospect of communist rule in the country. For the PKI, Islam and its influence in the society posed a formidable threat to the communist ideology. It was seen as part of the "national bourgeoisie" groups that should be eliminated from society.

The role of Islam in politics was also further reduced by the rise of the military, especially the Army, as the third pillar of power within Guided Democracy. Through its success in curbing several regional rebellions in the mid-1950s, the Army managed to strengthen its bargaining position within national politics. It has been noted, for example, that "under Guided Democracy, military officers held one-third of the posts in cabinet as well as a vast array of other official positions, especially as managers of state enterprises."[58] The main preoccupation of the Army, however, was clearly to contain the PKI's influence and power. The Army leadership was aware that if the PKI came to power, their political authority would be circumscribed. Its bitter enmity and rivalry with the PKI, however, did not immediately force the Army to form a coalition with Islamic groups. The Army, in fact, did nothing to resist Sukarno's decision to ban the largest Islamic party, the Masjumi, in 1960. Indeed, in addition to the general distaste of political parties prevalent among military officers, the Army also harboured strong antagonism towards Islam due to its struggle against the Darul Islam rebellion.

In the event, Sukarno emerged as the most powerful political force presiding over what Lev has termed as a "tri-partite dominant political configuration," with Sukarno deftly balancing the PKI against the Army.[59] Rivalry between the Army and the PKI provided the opportunity for Sukarno to enjoy what Kahin has termed "double marriage," namely, a situation where Sukarno needed the Army's and the PKI's support but at the same time the two forces became dependent upon him.[60] However, President Sukarno's position in the triangle was more as a protector of the PKI then a "pure balancer," because he himself was afraid of being engulfed by the Army's power and the threat of an Army takeover. Within such a power configuration, Islam was not in a position to influence, let alone dictate, any policy decisions. In other words, when Islam ceased as a factor in domestic politics, its influence in policy-making, including in foreign policy, was significantly reduced. As mentioned earlier, Islam was conspicuously absent in Sukarno's radical foreign policy aimed at challenging the existing international order through a coalition of left-leaning developing states such as China, North Vietnam, and North Korea.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the domestic origins of Indonesian foreign policy, Indonesia's earlier relations with the Islamic world, and the absence of Islam in Indonesian foreign policy during the period of Sukarno's Guided Democracy in 1957–1965. It demonstrates how, from the very beginning, Indonesian foreign policy had been defined not by religious considerations, but more by the overriding domestic concerns of successive governments to preserve national unity, secure international legality, attain regime legitimacy and

security, and strengthen domestic political ascendancy, in a highly competitive domestic political arena.

In its declaratory form, Indonesian foreign policy is void of any mention of Islam as the source of principles, norms, and values which guide the conduct of the Republic's foreign relations and diplomacy. Nor does Indonesia claim that its foreign policy is based on Islam. Instead, post-independent leaders defined the Republic's foreign policy in terms of universal values of serving national interests, supporting anti-colonialism and greater equality among nations, maintaining international peace and stability, and the establishment of a new world order based on independence, peace, and social justice.[61] Those values were then formulated in the form of two basic principles which guide Indonesia's foreign policy: *bebas* and *aktif* (independent and active). The chief architect of Indonesia's foreign policy, Mohammad Hatta, firmly believed that Indonesia's primary objectives and national interests – national independence, sovereignty, and security; internal consolidation; and economic development[62] – would be best served through a strong commitment to such a *bebas-aktif* principle. More importantly, the principle of *bebas-aktif* in foreign policy has three significant features: independence, anti-colonialism, and pragmatism.

Such domestic concerns and pragmatism were evident in the foreign policy of successive governments during the period of parliamentary democracy. Every government was more preoccupied with domestic survival than with pursuing a novel foreign policy agenda. When foreign policy issues did enter the realm of domestic politics, they were confined to issues with immediate relevance and interests to the domestic audience. The struggle for international recognition of Indonesia's independence, and the negotiation with the Netherlands over the transfer of West Irian, constituted two paramount issues within such concerns. The problem of state-identity formation, marked by the struggle to find a balance between the reality of pluralism on the one hand and Islam as the religion of the majority on the other, did not obstruct the paramount importance of such domestic priorities. Indeed, the debate between two major groups, the *kebangsaan* (national-secular) and Islam, prior to the proclamation of Indonesia's independence in August 1945 and beyond, did not have any significant impact on how foreign policy should be conducted.

When the international context came into the picture, it was dictated by the reality of power relations at global level and its possible impact on domestic politics rather than by universal religious concerns such as international Muslim brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*). In this context, the *bebas-aktif* principle was a response to demands by contending domestic political forces over the status of Indonesia in world politics amidst the growing rivalry between two opposing blocs led by the USA and the Soviet Union. To the outside world, it identified Indonesia's position in the international system, rejecting a commitment to either bloc in the rivalry between the two superpowers. Through this independent position in world politics, Hatta sought to

prevent ideological rivalry between Washington and Moscow from aggravating acute political differences within the country's political elite.[63] The previous debate among political elite on whether the Indonesia state should be based on Islam or not was not extended into the debate on the nature of foreign policy that the post-colonial state should adopt.

Within the context of dual state identity, characterised by the tension between the formal state identity defined in terms of *Pancasila* and the Islamic challenge to it, Islam was denied a formal place in politics and foreign policy. Again, foreign policy was determined more by pragmatic domestic concerns in a highly competitive political system rather than by the need to pursue an exclusive international Islamic agenda. An exclusive Islamic agenda was even conspicuously absent in the cabinet led by the largest Islamic party, the Masjumi. In general terms, foreign policies of Masjumi-led cabinets, both under Prime Minister Natsir and even more so during the tenure of the Sukiman Cabinet, can even be described as "pro-West neutralist." Both Natsir and Sukiman were obliged to frame Indonesia's external position within the context of the East–West divide rather than within the notion of the community of believers (*Muslim*) and non-believers (*Kaffir*) or between *dar-al-harb* (world of war) and *dar-al-Islam* (world of peace).

The absence of Islam as the basis of foreign policy was also reflected in the absence of the rhetoric on the need for Indonesia to work toward the establishment of a worldwide *ummah* or a "New Islamic world order." Nor did the Republic advocate the need to establish an Islamic "United Nations" under the influence of a leadership which has a universal dimension. As Choudhury has observed, "Indonesia, under both Sukarno and Suharto, has not shown any special enthusiasm for the unity of Muslim countries worldwide."[64] Instead of presenting itself as an Islamic state (*Dar-al Islam*) responsible to all Muslim nations (*ummah al-Islamiya*),[65] Indonesia on the contrary sought to join the existing international society and to become a party to the existing set of rules, norms, and values which had been long established in the practice of international relations based on the European international order.[66] Joining this Western-originated international order was seen as a prerequisite for Indonesia to gain international recognition in order to register and consolidate its distinct national identity among other states and, at the same time, to secure its very post-colonial existence.[67] Like other states which came into being after the Second World War, the Republic of Indonesia also needed international recognition as a sovereign and independent entity. It needed to register its separate legal personality and legitimacy within international society.

In terms of implementation, the debate and differences over the conduct of Indonesian foreign policy centred not on how far it had deviated or corresponded to Islamic values or norms, but more on whether Indonesia had or had not departed from the principle of *bebas-aktif*. The principle of *bebas-aktif* serves as a parameter within which all foreign policy initiatives by the

government should be justified and judged. As discussed in this chapter, a cabinet could fall just because it was accused of deviating from the *bebas-aktif* principle. The Sukiman Cabinet of the Islamic-based Masjumi, for example, was forced to resign in 1951 after it accepted American aid under the Mutual Security Act (MSA). Sukiman was accused of bringing Indonesia closer to the West, thus abandoning the principle of *bebas-aktif* in conducting the Republic's foreign policy.

Even though Islam has not been given a formal place in the quest for international identity, it does not necessarily mean that Islam has no place at all in Indonesian foreign policy. As a country where the majority of its population are Muslims, it would be insensible for Indonesia to neglect international issues with identifiable Islamic dimensions or overlook its relationships with Muslim countries, especially Arab–Islamic states. Moreover, a number of Arab–Islamic, states such as Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, were one of the earliest groups of countries to support the Indonesian nationalist struggle against the Dutch and recognise the Republic's independence. This was a concrete result of intensive diplomacy of religious tone conducted by a group of Islamic leaders such as Foreign Minister Agus Salim and a number of Indonesian Muslim students residing in those countries at the time.

However, the absence of Islam in foreign policy became more visible with the introduction of "Guided Democracy" by President Sukarno in July 1957. As the role of political parties in Indonesian domestic politics eclipsed with the rise of Sukarno to political ascendancy, Islam also ceased to be a potent political force. President Sukarno dramatically changed the domestic power configuration: the Army and the PKI became two primary beneficiaries of power, primarily by supporting Sukarno's personal agenda and dominance in politics. Sukarno immediately radicalised foreign policy, in which the conduct of Indonesia's foreign relations was dominated by the quest to challenge the West, win the sovereignty of West Irian, oppose the creation the of Malay Federation, and form a close Sino–Indonesian alliance. The Army and the PKI, locked in a bitter rivalry, were obliged to support such radical foreign policy agenda for different political purposes.

Within such domestic political context, the position of Islam in politics was also marginalised by the fact that both the Army and the PKI harboured strong antagonism towards Islam. Islam, however, did make a come back as a significant political force with the collapse of Sukarno's Guided Democracy in 1965, especially through a coalition with the Army in eliminating the role of the PKI and indeed the party itself. However, such a return into political significance was short-lived as the military leadership under General Suharto began to implement its own version of Indonesia's political system – the New Order – within which the formal role of Islam in politics was once again denied. Indeed, once the military had secured a political ascendancy after the downfall of Sukarno and the PKI, Islam was soon perceived as a form of challenge not only to the military-based New Order regime but also to the

state identity of *Pancasila* itself. The extent and the role of Islam in politics and policy process was once again subject to strict state control. A deliberate policy that strictly prohibited religion to penetrate politics was forcefully invoked and reinforced. And, the foreign policy of the New Order government led by General Suharto, and the place of Islam in it, reflected such a domestic political climate.

4 Islam in Suharto's foreign policy (1967–1989)

The primacy of domestic and regional politics

It has been argued in Chapter 3 that Indonesian foreign policy since the Republic's independence was preoccupied with pressing domestic and international priorities of maintaining internal unity and securing international legality. On the question of internal unity, the main line of contention centred on the debate on the nature of state identity between the secular-nationalists (*kebangsaan*) and the Islamists. While a formula of compromise was reached in the form of *Pancasila*, the debate was not extended to the realm of foreign policy. In foreign policy, a different kind of domestic division, primarily between *kebangsaan* and leftist groups, became a major factor that greatly influenced the initial formulation of Indonesia's international position. In resisting the pressure from the left that Indonesia should align itself with the Soviet bloc, the *kebangsaan* group favoured a free and active formula for foreign policy. Within that context, Islamic political forces were also faced with a reality that obliged them to define Indonesia's international position and identity in terms of the emerging bipolar character of post-war international politics. In other words, Islam did not exercise identifiable influence upon the international outlook of the Republic, nor did it manifest in the basis and content of foreign policy.

The secondary importance, if not the absence, of Islam in foreign policy became more apparent after President Sukarno was replaced by General Suharto in 1966. Unlike his predecessor, General Suharto's New Order government abandoned Sukarno's policy of international adventurism and restored the traditional function of foreign policy to advance domestic interests defined in terms of *stabilitas* (stability) and *pembangunan ekonomi* (economic development). The consolidation of political power, the absence of political challenge, and the restoration of Indonesia's regional and international standing were seen as three important prerequisites for achieving such interests. Within that context, the New Order government maintained that foreign policy should only function as an instrument of development rather than as a vehicle by which opposition could challenge the government. As Islam was largely seen as a potential challenge, the New Order government took great care not to allow foreign policy to be dictated by Islamic considerations.

This chapter discusses the place and role of Islam in Suharto's domestic politics and foreign policy during the first two decades of his rule. The discussion is divided into three sections. The first section outlines the nature of Suharto's New Order government and the regime's relationship with Islam. The second section discusses the limits of the "Islamic factor" and the primacy of regional relations in Suharto's foreign policy. The third section examines Islamic voices in foreign policy and how the nature of the New Order's power structure served as a constraint on the entrance of the Islamic factor in foreign policy.

Suharto's New Order and Islam

The rise of General Suharto to control began with the breakdown of the precarious balance of power among the three pillars – President Sukarno, the PKI, and the Army – that made up the Guided Democracy regime. That breakdown took place after an abortive coup by a group of Army dissidents led ostensibly by a battalion commander in the Cakrabirawa palace guard, Lieutenant Colonel Untung, in September 1965, in which the PKI was implicated. The abortive coup was quickly quelled by the Army's Strategic Reserve (KOSTRAD) led by Major-General Suharto. It was soon followed by a series of anti-PKI and anti-government demonstrations by students. The military, through a coalition with students, Islamic groups, and selected party politicians, began to undermine Sukarno's power.

After a meeting with three senior generals on 11 March 1966, President Sukarno agreed to transfer executive power to General Suharto. With the transfer of executive power, the Army intensified the liquidation of its arch rival, the PKI, which had been declared an illegal organisation. The destruction of the PKI paved the way for the Army to consolidate its position as the only powerful organised force in the country. With the confirmation of General Suharto as president by the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS) in March 1968, the Army secured its position as the dominant force in Indonesia's political structure. Once the so-called New Order government was established in office, however, its relations with Islam began to change for the worse. And, Indonesian foreign policy during the New Order period reflected such significant changes in domestic politics.

Islam and the genesis of New Order

The coalition that brought the military to power could be described as an "impossible coalition" because it included social forces with differing ideological standpoints. As mentioned earlier, the rise of New Order became possible through the formation of a coalition among the military, students, and Islamic groups with the object of stripping Sukarno of power. Indeed, the only basis upon which this diverse group could unite was a common interest

in overthrowing the same enemy: the PKI and also President Sukarno. All Islamic organisations viewed the PKI and communism as the common enemy of Islam[1] and saw President Sukarno as the party's main protector at the expense of other groups, Islam in particular. For that reason, the Islamic groups enthusiastically entered an alliance of mutual convenience with the military in the political struggle against the communists.

For its part, the military saw an opportunity to cultivate a close relationship with the Islamic community in order to strengthen its political position vis-à-vis the Communist Party. Even though the military leadership had generally favoured a secular state, they believed that "a strong Muslim influence could serve as an ideological and political counterweight to ultra-nationalist and Communist political efforts."[2] As similar support to counter the growing influence of the PKI was also sought from many other groups, however, the military overture to the Muslim community must be seen in the context of the overall military struggle against the communists. Indeed, Islam proved to be a powerful ally to the military in its efforts not only to counter the growing influence of the PKI during the later years of the Sukarno period, but also to eliminate the Party after the abortive coup attempt on 30 September 1965. For the military, Islam served as "the third hand" that could be used to crush the PKI.[3]

Indeed, the Islamic community soon proved to be a reliable partner to the military in crushing the PKI. Based on the conviction that the communists were anti-God and infidels, many Islamic organisations saw the crushing of the PKI as a *jihad* (holy war) for Muslims. A leader of Muhammadiyah in Central Java, for example, issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) declaring the struggle against the PKI as *ibadah* (compulsary religious act).[4] Despite their differences, leaders of NU and Muhammadiyah joined forces in establishing the *Kesatuan Aksi Pengganyangan Gestapu/PKI* (Crush Gestapu/PKI United Act or KAP) on 4 October and demanded the banning and the dissolution of the PKI. During November and December 1965, Banser, the youth wing of the NU, took part in the mass killing of members of the PKI and its sympathisers in Central and East Java.[5]

In a matter of months, the coalition between the military and Islamic forces managed to eliminate the PKI, in both a political and physical sense. By early 1967, however, not long after the rise of the New Order government, this coalition began to disintegrate. Under General Suharto's leadership, the Indonesian military (ABRI) was determined to secure its position as the most powerful political force. To that end, it began to consolidate its own power at the expense of its coalition partners. The New Order government, worried about the challenge that Islam might pose to the state, sought to neutralise the influence of Islam as a political force. Islam soon felt tremendous pressure from the new military-backed regime to relinquish its political role and influence. Indeed, the state–Islam relationship soon changed from that of cooperation to mutual and bitter antagonism.

Indonesia's military and Islam: from cooperation to antagonism

The rise of the New Order government, and the destruction of the PKI, was seen by many Islamic groups as an opportunity to reclaim their political role. Many Muslim leaders, especially leaders of the former Masjumi party, believed that the new juncture seemed favourable for them to make a come back to the political arena. When the New Order government released several key leaders of Masjumi detained by Sukarno, supporters of the party were convinced that the new government would welcome the return of Islam into politics. Attempts were soon made to revive the Masjumi and the government was asked to rehabilitate the party. There was also high expectation among the party leaders that the new political environment would open up the possibility for the reinforcement of the Djakarta Charter through constitutional and democratic means.[6]

Such expectations, however, soon proved to be premature and ill-fated. The Muslims misjudged the true intention of the military and Suharto's regime. Instead of opening up the political space to Islam, the New Order sought to consolidate its power by dominating the political space itself. President Suharto refused to rehabilitate the Masjumi when in early 1967 he made it clear that "ABRI cannot accept the rehabilitation of former Masjumi party."[7] The plans by several other Islamic figures, especially by former Vice-President Mohammad Hatta, to form new independent Islamic political parties were also thwarted. The New Order, however, permitted and in fact closely supervised the establishment of Parmusi, a new Islamic party meant to accommodate the political aspirations of modernist Islam. To ensure its control over the party, the New Order government did not allow former leaders of Masjumi to lead the Parmusi.[8]

Such a dramatic change in the relationship between Islam and the state reflected the view of the dominant force within the New Order government – the military and President Suharto – regarding the tasks of the government and the nature of political Islam. Upon taking over power, the New Order government immediately established its hallmark as a government that would devote its mission to achieve *stabilitas politik* (political stability) and *pembangunan ekonomi* (economic development). For President Suharto and the military, such tasks can only be carried out through "a major revamping of the party system in which the old 'ideological' parties would be replaced by 'programmatic' organizations more attuned to the needs of a modernizing society."[9] And, within such a society, only official state ideology – the Pancasila – was allowed to serve as a reference in political discourse. Indeed, the New Order government had from the outset declared that it "would take firm steps against anyone, whichever side, whatever group which will deviate from *Pancasila*."[10]

In addition to presenting itself as *agen pembangunan* (agent of development), the New Order government also portrayed itself as the saviour of the state and

Pancasila from the communists. Indeed, the military dominance and legitimacy within the New Order polity was primarily based upon its claim as the true defender of *Pancasila* from any threat. In that context, "the army is fond of defining its place in Indonesia as the defender of the centre against the extreme left – communism – and the extreme right – Islamic fundamentalism."[11] As its main rival – the PKI-was now practically defunct, the military saw that Islam could pose a potential challenge to its political dominance. In the government's view, a threat to Indonesian stability could come from "those individuals who seek to establish a state based on a religious ideology."[12] And, for many military leaders, that "religious ideology" was Islam.

The military's suspicion of Islam was primarily based on its own experience in the 1950s in dealing with Islam. Soon after independence, the Army had to fight several Muslim-inspired regional revolts, especially the Darul Islam (DI) rebellion in West Java, Aceh, and South Sulawesi. Harold Crouch, for example, noted that suspicion of political Islam was strong among "officers who had fought against the Darul Islam and other Muslim-inspired regional revolts."[13] The suspicion of the Masjumi by the military was driven by the party's link to the regional rebellion in the 1950s by the Sumatera-based Indonesian Revolutionary Government (*Pemerintah Revolusi Republik Indonesia*, PRRI). Crouch noted that those who had "participated in the central government's campaign against PRRI were extremely bitter about the Masyumi's 'treachery' in sympathising with, or at least not condemning, a revolt which cost the lives of 2,500 soldiers."[14] Indeed, these regional rebellions led the military to believe that "Islam poses a potential threat to the unity of the nation."[15]

The military was also suspicious that the Muslim community had not abandoned its attempt to formalise Islam as an official basis of the Indonesian state. As discussed in Chapter 2, Islamic groups sought to formalise Islam as the basis of the state prior to independence and beyond. Despite the consensus among Muslims to accept *Pancasila* as the formula of compromise, important segments of the military "continue to harbour doubts whether this Islamic consensus behind Pancasila is genuine."[16] Such suspicion was then strengthened further when some Muslim leaders once again tried to raise the issue after the fall of Sukarno, especially during the Special Session of the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS) in 1968.[17] When the debate on this issue looked as if it might bring the meeting into deadlock, General Suharto saw the Muslim's attempt as "a religious terror" and threatened to undertake firm measures against any attempt to exploit religion to serve political interests.[18]

Such experience and distrust strengthened the determination of the New Order government and its supporters, especially the military, to prevent Islam from becoming an independent political force. It was believed that by denying Islam any formal role in politics and policy process, a challenge to the *Pancasila* state and the New Order's ideology of development could be

managed, if not eliminated. In this regard, foreign policy issues were also seen as an instrument by which the Muslims could pose a challenge to the government and its ideology. Therefore, as discussed below, the presence of Islam in this area was also subject to careful government control.

Limits of the "Islamic factor" in Suharto's foreign policy

It has been mentioned in Chapter 3 that Indonesian foreign policy, especially in terms of its declaratory form, is void of any mention of Islam as the source of principles, norms, and values which guide the conduct of the Republic's foreign relations and diplomacy. Nor does Indonesia claim that its foreign policy is based on Islam. The New Order government reinforced that reality by pledging to bring Indonesian foreign policy back in line with the prescribed principle of *bebas-aktif*. For President Suharto and his New Order government, domestic priority of economic reconstruction assumed greater significance than political activism in the international arena. The years after 1967 saw Indonesian foreign policy in retreat as the government devoted primary attention to the more modest, but pressing, goals of political stability and economic development.

The New Order consciously opted for a "low international profile," abandoning Sukarno's pretension to "cure" the world. The policy of moving closer to the West for internal reconstruction purposes, however, was seen as a clear indication that Indonesia had now turned into a "good boy" of the West and international financial institutions. It was charged that the New Order's foreign policy was neither "independent" nor "active," and that such foreign policy led to the waning of Indonesia's role and influence in world politics. In this regard, it is important to note that such criticisms were not meant to encourage Indonesia to move closer toward Islamic and Muslim states, but they suggested the importance for Indonesia of being independent in the management of its external relations.

The importance of independence in the conduct of Indonesian foreign policy is closely linked to the country's quest for a distinct international identity as a leading Third World country. That identity has been defined more in terms of its commitment to the secular notion of non-alignment and Third World nationalism rather than in terms of co-religious concerns of pan-Islamism or universal Muslim solidarity. Indonesia, together with Egypt, Yugoslavia, and India, was one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) which had its origin at the Afro–Asian Conference held in Bandung in 1955. The principle of non-alignment has been regarded as a basic tenet of Indonesian foreign policy, and it was more so during Suharto's period. In the words of Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik, "Indonesia has not opted for non-alignment, Indonesia was born a non-aligned country."[19]

The fact that Indonesia insisted on hosting the NAM Summit in 1992, at a time when the relevance of the movement was being questioned, also

suggests the importance accorded to NAM by the Indonesian government. No parallel attempt was undertaken to chair the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) even though such an undertaking would certainly have brought more support from Muslim constituencies in domestic politics. In other words, Indonesia's preference to enhance its image as a leading non-aligned Third World country clearly reveals that the Islamic factor is only secondary in the Republic's quest for international identity.

Indonesia and the Arab–Islamic world: a secondary priority

Even though the Middle East is said to be special for Indonesia in a historical and religious-cultural sense,[20] and Arab countries constituted one of the earliest groups of states that recognised the Republic's independence, Indonesia's relations with the region became "distant" since the recognition of sovereignty by the Dutch in December 1949. It has been acknowledged in Indonesia that "even though Indonesia's relations with Middle East are anchored in strong historical and cultural roots, in its developments – especially in terms of economic and political ties-Indonesia appeared 'to move away' from the region."[21] Changes in national priorities, which required more attention to be paid to more pressing domestic issues, seemed to have contributed to this trend. Indeed, foreign policy as such constituted a secondary priority amid the need to cope with internal challenges.

As Indonesia under General Suharto became preoccupied with such issues as internal reconstruction and consolidation, national unity and territorial integrity, "no evidence of Islamic strain was manifested in foreign policy."[22] As mentioned earlier, Suharto believed that the need to promote political stability and economic development required Indonesia to put the management of a stable Southeast Asian regional order on top of its foreign policy agenda. Such domestic economic imperative also brought Indonesia closer to the West. It was such pragmatic logic, which is obviously non-religious in content, that guided and shaped Indonesia's New Order's foreign policy.

Its policy towards Arab countries in particular and the Islamic world in general was dictated more by the non-religious nature of domestic interests than by universal Islamic values. As former Foreign Minister Adam Malik acknowledged back in 1976, "Indonesia did not regard that region as important, except for pilgrimage every year. With the exploitation of oil, we then became aware of [its] importance."[23] Indeed, for most of its rule, the New Order's policy towards Arab–Islamic countries and its attitude towards important issues in the Islamic world reflected such sentiment. Nor did the New Order's foreign policy as such depart fundamentally from the foreign policy of Sukarno's Guided Democracy. As Leifer has noted, the New Order's foreign policy "reinstated a former course rather than pursuing a novel one," and in so far as the novelty was obtained, "it arose, in part, from a change in style."[24] The New Order's inclination to continue its predecessor's

Middle East policy also stemmed from this general feature of the regime's foreign policy.

That conscious continuity in Indonesian policy towards the Middle East in particular and issues in the Islamic world in general was clearly reflected in the Republic's policy toward Israel and the question of Palestine. From the outset, Indonesia has been known as a country which consistently supported the Arabs and the Palestinians in their struggle against Israel. In the main, such support has been, and still is, expressed in the form of a policy of non-recognition towards Israel. Meanwhile, as stated by President Suharto in November 1987, Indonesia considered the cause of the Palestinians as sacred and "as part of the irreversible global movement against colonial rule and alien domination."[25] Policy pronouncements on this non-recognition of Israel and pro-Arab/Palestinian stance have been noticeable for the absence of reference to Islam as the primary reason. On the one hand, support for the Palestinians' struggle was based on "the principle of justice which is also the principle of our foreign policy. The factor of same religion is an additional one."[26] On the other hand, the existence of Israel was opposed on the grounds that it is "an aggressor" which has occupied Arab territories and denied "our Palestinian brothers their legitimate right to self-determination and to establish their own state."[27]

The implementation of policy beyond verbal expressions of support, however, has been marked by caution. For example, the possibility of opening a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) office in Jakarta was pushed aside in 1974. The military was said to have raised its disagreement when Foreign Minister Adam Malik indicated that Indonesia had no objection to such an office being set up. The possible impacts that a PLO office might have on the Muslim community in Indonesia, and also apprehension of the communist connections of the PLO, were said to have been the main reasons.[28] Indeed, it took another fifteen years before a request by the PLO to open a mission in Jakarta was finally granted in 1989 with the object of restoring Indonesia's image as a non-aligned country. On the other hand, Indonesia was also said to have maintained unofficial relations with Israel. It was reported, for example, in September 1979 Indonesia agreed to purchase fourteen A-4 Skyhawk ground-attack fighter aircraft and two TA-4 Skyhawk trainers from Israel.[29]

Caution seemed to be the rule also in Indonesia's response and attitude towards Iran's Islamic revolution. Indonesia's government was worried that the rise of an Islamic government in Iran under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini would serve as a source of inspiration for radical elements within Indonesia's Muslim society to renew their attempt at establishing an Islamic state. Suharto's New Order government was also worried that the Islamic Republic would "export" the Islamic revolution to Indonesia. Such a worry was reflected by, for example, the confiscation of Iranian publications on the Islamic revolution by Indonesian security authorities, restrictions on those

Indonesians who wanted to study in Iran, and close monitoring of the Iranian embassy in Jakarta.[30]

Indonesia did not issue any statement when the Shah was ousted, nor did it issue one when American hostages were released. It also refused to play a role as a mediator in the bitter conflict between the USA and Iran.[31] When the war between Iran and Iraq broke out, Indonesia opted for a neutral position despite suggestions that the Republic step in as a mediator. Thus, if the Islamic factor was primary in Indonesian foreign policy, the Republic might have responded positively to such a suggestion in order to fulfil the call by the *Quran* that "if two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of God."[32]

The state and the content of actual relations between Indonesia and Arab–Islamic states have not indicated the presence of close cooperation. In terms of trade, for example, until the end of the 1980s Indonesia's trade with Arab–Islamic states accounted for only a small per centage of Indonesia's total trade. Indonesian exports to the region in 1981, for example, accounted for US$103 million only. In 1987, it increased to US$196.2 million.[33] Indeed, there was an impression that the Indonesian government was not too interested in improving economic and trade relations with this region.[34] Closer cooperation was only evident in cultural areas, especially in the educational field. A number of Middle East countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, and Iran have become the source of scholarships for many Indonesian students studying in those countries.[35]

However, ambiguity between form and substance in Indonesia's involvement in the Islamic world was more evident in Indonesian policy towards the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). When the OIC, which was established in 1970, drafted its Charter in 1972, Indonesia declined to seek formal membership and refused to sign it on the basis that the Republic was not an Islamic state. Nonetheless, due to the fact that the majority of its population are Muslims, and that it could not ignore Muslim opinion over international issues with Islamic dimensions, Indonesia continued to participate in the Organisation. It has been argued, however, that such ambiguity resulted from the government's consciousness of "a requirement to express at least nominal solidarity when appropriate in order to contain [Islamic forces] and deny them an issue which might mobilize their strength."[36] In other words, the New Order's government was forced to reconcile the need to preserve its non-religious identity of the state on the one hand, and the imperative to respond to constraints presented by its domestic reality on the other. Close linkage between domestic and international dimensions of Islam, of which the dilemma of identity was one such manifestation, constitutes a core issue in Indonesian policy towards Arab–Islamic states.

Indeed, Indonesia's cautious policy and attitude towards the Middle East and Islamic issues consequently put the Republic in a "unique" position in the Islamic world. While it represented the largest Muslim country in the world, its position and role in the Islamic world has been considered marginal. Indonesia's responses to issues in the Islamic world were expressed mainly in declaratory forms. The content of operational policy, however, has been subject to domestic political considerations and constraints. Consequently, as a Muslim intellectual Amien Rais has noted, "in terms of political influence, Indonesia has little leverage in the Islamic world . . . .we have no influence in the decision-making process in various Islamic congresses and conferences."[37] Indeed, Indonesia's former Minister of Religion Tarmizi Taher admitted that "it is true that our marginal or peripheral position in the Muslim world map makes it difficult for us to influence the Muslim societies residing in the centre of Islam."[38] In other words, such a marginal position reflected the fact that Indonesia's relations with Arab–Islamic countries were accorded only secondary priority in the Republic's foreign relations.

The Islamic factor and the primacy of regional politics

Indeed, in geopolitical terms, Indonesia accorded the immediate region of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) the first priority of its foreign policy.[39] The secondary nature of the Islamic factor in Indonesian foreign policy was reflected in Indonesia's attitude and response towards a number of issues with identifiable Islamic dimensions in that region. This was clearly demonstrated in Indonesia's attitude towards the case of the Muslim minority problem of the southern Philippines. In the Fourth Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference in 1973, Indonesia, together with Malaysia, blocked an attempt by Libya to put the question of the Moro case on the agenda. At the Fifth Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference in Kuala Lumpur in 1974, Indonesia argued that any solution to the Moro question should be within the framework of national sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Philippines.[40]

This episode clearly suggested that the primary concern of Indonesia is to preserve good working relations with an ASEAN partner, thus to preserve ASEAN itself which has been described as *sokoguru* (the cornerstone) of the Republic's foreign policy. To that effect, Islamic considerations did not enter Indonesian policy in ASEAN. The episode also suggested that when Islamic issues clashed with non-Islamic ones in foreign policy, especially on issues considered to be of strategic importance for Indonesia's regional interests, preference on the latter tended to prevail. It also demonstrates that the principle of supporting the struggle for Muslim rights and the downtrodden (*mustaza'ffin*) throughout the world, which serves as an important element in a foreign policy guided by Islamic values – as demonstrated in the Islamic

Republic of Iran's foreign policy since 1979[41] – was conspicuously absent in Indonesian foreign policy.

In fact, the internal and international context put greater pressure on the New Order government to exercise its influence on Manila and play a more active involvement in seeking a solution to the Moro problem. That pressure came from growing concern in both the international Muslim communities at the time and the domestic domain. Indonesian Muslims accused the Indonesian government of not doing enough to solve the conflict. Regular military clashes between the Philippine Army and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) since the early 1970s and the introduction of martial law served to accelerate that growing concern.[42] Meanwhile, a requirement to show full support to the MNLF would surely contradict Indonesia's commitment to ASEAN and its cardinal principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other member states. Moreover, sitting idle would surely invite accusations from the domestic Muslim community that Indonesia neglected persecuted co-religionists; a prospect that would bring the Moro issue into domestic politics in the form of mounting pressure on the government.

A solution to resolve the apparent dilemma between domestic pressure and commitment to preserve regional harmony was found in a measured role to mediate the conflict on the one hand and defend the Philippines in the OIC on the other. Indonesia's attempt to raise the issue with President Marcos in May 1974 did not result in any solution. To the consternation of Jakarta, Marcos pushed Indonesia aside and approached the Middle East and the OIC to solve the Moro issue. Unhappy with Marcos's response, Indonesia dropped its effort.[43] In fact, Indonesia was not prepared to engage in a sensitive issue which might have a divisive impact on both domestic and regional politics. As Indonesia's tireless efforts to seek a solution to the Cambodian conflict demonstrated, the Republic appeared more prepared to engage in an immediate regional problem which would contribute to the attainment of regional stability without stirring up divisive domestic debate.

In conclusion, it can be said that for the most part of Suharto's New Order, Indonesian foreign policy was influenced more by pragmatic and non-religious considerations than by Islamic ones. When it was involved in issues with identifiable Islamic dimensions, that involvement was framed and justified in terms of other identities than Islam. Indeed, the foreign policy of Suharto's New Order was dictated by the primacy of internal economic development, the attainment of a leading regional role, and the enhancement of non-aligned status at global level. This feature of foreign policy, in which the Islamic factor assumed secondary significance, reflected the nature of the New Order's domestic politics and the place of Islam in it.

The Islamic factor and the domestic political context of foreign policy

Why, then, had the Islamic factor in Suharto's foreign policy been only secondary in importance? Was it because the Muslim groups had no clear foreign policy agenda or simply because they were not concerned about international affairs? In fact, Muslim groups in Indonesia have always harboured their own voices in foreign policy, and these voices are important in understanding the relationship between Islam and foreign policy. Such voices, while they are represented only by very few Muslim intellectuals, scholars, and activists, were in fact quite comprehensive and have been clearly expressed. Moreover, they encompass a wide range of issues: from the question of Indonesia's international identity within the international society, the question of the PLO and Israel, Indonesia's close relations with the West, the state of relations between Indonesia and the Middle East, to the question of international Muslim solidarity. They also entertained a particular world-view which might not coincide with the mainstream view among the traditional foreign policy elite.

However, as demonstrated in the following discussion, Islamic voices on foreign affairs were overshadowed by perceptions and voices of the other traditional foreign policy elite, especially those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU), ABRI, and President Suharto. This feature of foreign policy-making, which also reflected the nature of Suharto's New Order's power structure, served as a constraint to the entrance of the Islamic factor in foreign policy. As in domestic policy-making, the foreign policy of Suharto's New Order also became the domain of a few government officials and small national elite. This small group did not see the need for foreign policy to be based and guided by Islamic values and principles. For them, foreign policy was simply an instrument to serve internal and external interests of the state which had not been exclusively defined in terms of Islam. They argued that foreign policy should be guided by "national interests," and those "national interests" did not require Indonesia to place Islam as a primary consideration in the conduct of foreign policy.

Islamic voices in foreign policy had also been constrained by the nature of the domestic political context within which they were expressed. Within that political context, as discussed earlier, Islam had never been allowed to express itself as a formal political force. As the state itself is not defined in terms of religion, the Islamic factor in foreign policy was a secondary consideration. When it was taken into account, it was done within the broader interests of regime legitimisation and security and pragmatic international priorities. This was evident during the late Suharto period. Another factor, perhaps a more important one, responsible for the obscure presence, if not absence, of the Islamic factor in foreign policy was the marginal position of political Islam in politics and policy-making.

Islamic voices in foreign policy

What then is the aspiration of Islamic groups in foreign policy? In the main, the primary concern of Muslim leaders and groups over foreign policy and international affairs has been limited to those issues with identifiable Islamic dimensions or problems in the Islamic world, especially in the Middle East.[44] However, a number of Muslim leaders are known to have broader concerns over the international identity of the state. One of those leaders is Amien Rais, former chairman of the second-largest Muslim organisation Muhammadiyah. He is also known as a leading Muslim intellectual with a strong academic background in international affairs who also teaches the subject at the University of Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, and has written a number of articles on the subject. For Rais, the question of state identity within the international community is an important one. He argued that it is important for the government to have a clear stance on where Indonesia belongs in the wider international system.

In one of his writings, for example, Rais maintained that "Indonesia's government is ambiguous in identifying itself . . . even though Indonesia is acknowledged as the greatest Muslim country by the outside world, the government tends to identify Indonesia as a country closer to the Far East."[45] Rais also charged that the reason behind the government's inclination to identify Indonesia with the Pacific is because "some Indonesia's leaders and intellectuals do not like [Indonesia to be identified with the Islamic world]." Rais admitted that he in fact also agreed that it is more appropriate to say that "Indonesia belongs to the Far Eastern group of states." What he resented, however, was the fact that "there is a group of intellectuals from a certain institution which wants to make Indonesia only as a member of Pacific region, and separate it from the Islamic world." Moreover, in Rais's view, the attitude of the government itself has never been clear on this identity. Therefore, Rais pointed out, Indonesia's attitude towards a number of international issues has been constrained by this ambiguity in identifying itself within international society.[46]

Corollary to the question of the international identity of the state is the question of Indonesia's position in the Islamic world. The Islamic voice on this theme generally stresses the fact that Indonesia's position and role has been marginal in the Islamic world, and that should be corrected. There is also strong apprehension over Indonesia's limited attention and interest towards the Middle East. Riza Shihbudi, Indonesia's leading expert on the Middle East, for example, maintains that "the Arab states constituted the earliest countries that recognised Indonesia's independence, but in its developments, Jakarta seems to have been more 'intimate' with the West instead of the Middle East."[47] He also observes that "Indonesia's performance in [the Middle East] has not yet reached its full potential, even though the country has many national interests there."[48] Similarly, Rais also complains that "we can feel

that in international [Islamic] forums, Indonesia's leverage has not been commensurate with the size of its Muslim population . . . . So, I see that Indonesia's position in the Islamic world has not been ideal yet."[49] Such views clearly suggest that there are strong expectations from the Muslim community that Indonesia should pay more attention to the Middle East and should move to improve its relations with countries in the region.

Specific attention is also paid to the question of what kind of Islamic image Indonesia wants to project into the international community. Taher, for example, is convinced that Indonesia could make a positive contribution to the Islamic world in particular and the international community in general. One reason for this, he argues, is that "the strategy of religious development in Indonesia is developing Indonesian Muslims to become the *ummatan wasatan* (moderate and quality-oriented *ummah*)." Taher clearly implies the need for Indonesia to extend this approach in its policy towards the Islamic world when he stated that "what is to be achieved by this moderate strategy becomes the ideal target of Islam and the Muslim world today and tomorrow."[50] Indeed, this description tries to present an image of Islam in Indonesia that is different from what is commonly understood in the West, especially on the perception of Islam as a radical force. Similarly, Rais argues that Islam in Indonesia will serve as a moderating force. While he acknowledges that "in [Indonesia's] society, radicalism is still latent but it could become actual," he also argues that "Islam is in fact capable of eradicating the seeds of radicalism and of creating an environment free from radicalism."[51]

Apart from the two basic issues of the international identity of the state mentioned above, the Muslim community in Indonesia is generally more concerned about more concrete and actual issues facing the *ummah* in the Islamic world. In this regard, the question of the Palestinian struggle against Israel and the question of Israel's role in the Arab–Israeli conflict constitute two related issues that attract the attention of Indonesia's Muslim community. For many Indonesian Muslims, the Palestinian–Israeli conflict has never been seen as a pure bilateral problem between the two sides. Nor is it seen as merely a Middle East problem. Instead, the conflict has always been seen as a common problem of the Islamic world and the Muslims throughout the world. More specifically, the Palestinian struggle to regain its occupied territory from Israel is seen as a struggle of Islam. This Islamic dimension is explained well by Lukman Harun, a leader of Muhammadiyah and also chairman of the Committee for Islamic Solidarity (*Komite Solidaritas Islam*): "for the Muslim community, to support the Palestinian struggle means to help liberating the Mosque of Aqsha from Zionist Israel's occupation. The Mosque is located in Jerusalem, which is the third holy land for Islam after Medina and Mecca."[52] In other words, for Indonesian Muslims, the Palestinian problem constitutes an issue with the most identifiable Islamic dimension.

Based on such a perception, Muslim groups and leaders had been pressing the Indonesian government to take a more hardline position against Israel

and show greater support to the PLO. Rais, for example, complained in 1986 that Indonesia's attitude towards the PLO has been the most ambivalent compared to other Muslim countries. Indonesia, in Rais's view, "has always been cautious even in its statements . . . . We have never expressed our opinion on Israel in a 'hard' way, nor have we expressed our support for PLO fully." [53] Similar criticism was also expressed by Hasan Basri, Chairman of MUI, who asked the government to help the PLO instead of probing the possibility of establishing diplomatic ties with Israel following the PLO–Israel peace agreement in 1993[54] because "supporting the Palestinian has been the aspiration of Indonesia's Muslim for a long time."[55] Some Muslim activists even went to the extent of suggesting the government send volunteers to Palestine to help the PLO in its struggle against Israel.[56]

Indonesia's close relations with the West also constitute an issue which attracted attention from some Muslim groups. However, it is important to note that the voice of the Islamic community has been divided on this issue. The first voice has been critical, if not anti, of the West. Another group has been quite moderate on the issue. This moderate voice is common among Islamic leaders who hold governmental ranks, such as former Minister of Religion Taher who argues that "[in Southeast Asian context], anti-Western sentiment has not developed in this region, except in the case of solidarity, for instance, with the Bosnian Muslim . . . . The religion of Islam and the Muslims of Southeast Asia show no sign of becoming a political threat to the Western world, but may become an economic rival or partner to the US economic power in the long term."[57] The general attitude of Indonesians towards the West, however, has been mixed containing elements of both admiration and suspicion.[58]

The state of relations between Indonesia and the Middle East has generally been disappointing for the Muslim community. It has been mentioned earlier that Suharto's government was not too interested in building close relationship with those countries for fear of unintended consequences that such a relationship might bring to domestic politics. That attitude did not correspond to the general sentiment among the Muslim community. It has been observed that "Indonesian Muslims feel involved in the fate of other Muslims in different region."[59] New Order's foreign policy has been criticised for its reluctance to institutionalise Indonesia's relations with the Middle East beyond political rhetoric. Such an attitude is seen to have ignored the "feeling of involvement" by the majority of Indonesian people with the Middle East region. In fact, at the people-to-people level, that feeling has its roots in the well-established traditional religious connection that can be traced back long before the existence of the Republic of Indonesia itself.[60]

An examination of Islamic voices on foreign policy in Indonesia cannot be considered complete without taking into account critical voices of the Committee for Solidarity of the Islamic World (KISDI). KISDI is one of few Muslim organisations in Indonesia which pays special attention to and devotes

much of its activities to international affairs. This organisation was established in 1987 on the suggestion by the late Mohammad Natsir, former Indonesian prime minister in the 1950s and leader of the banned Masjumi party.[61] As suggested by its name, KISDI is primarily concerned with issues and problems facing the Muslim community throughout the world. The main concern of KISDI has been the affairs of the Islamic world, especially in defending the rights of Palestinian people and condemning Israel's policy in the Middle East and American support. When former Yugoslavia was torn by ethnic conflict between Bosnian Muslims and the Serbs, KISDI took an active role in voicing the condemnation and protests against atrocities committed by the Serbs.

The above discussion clearly reveals that foreign policy and international affairs attract wide attention from the Indonesian Islamic community. However, that attention has been primarily, but not exclusively, confined to issues in the Middle East region in particular and international issues in the Muslim world in general. As observed by one scholar, this is due to close emotional (read: religious) ties between Indonesia's Muslim community and the region. The same scholar also suggests that Indonesian Muslims are more familiar with the Middle East than with other regions. He also suspects that Indonesia's role and involvement in the Cambodian conflict in particular and Southeast Asia in general have not been widely understood by the people.[62] Indeed, there has been an impression that those regional issues are only the concerns of the small foreign policy community in Indonesia. In other words, "there has been a wide gap between the people's aspiration on foreign policy issues and the actual policy of the government."[63]

Foreign policy-making under the New Order: domain of the few

Traditionally, members of Indonesia's small "foreign policy community" primarily constituted a number of figures from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU), the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI), and other non-governmental individuals primarily from research institutes, universities, and mass media. The dynamic interaction among these groups constituted a key element in the process of Indonesian foreign policy-making. Discourse on foreign policy issues at national level, and also policy formulation, has been dominated by this small "foreign policy community." Within such policy-making process, where numbers of participants are limited, voices of Muslim groups on a number of foreign policy issues were conspicuously overshadowed and subdued.

The Indonesian Foreign Ministry has been largely a civilian domain since the birth of the Republic of Indonesia. The position of Foreign Minister has always been filled by a civilian. With the inception of a military-dominated New Order government in 1967, this civilian characteristic was to a certain extent retained. During the early years of the New Order, however, DEPLU was heavily staffed by senior military officers. Many senior military officers took up various important and high positions in the Ministry. With the

exception of the Foreign Minister's position, for example, the two next highest ranks in DEPLU, Secretary-General and Inspector-General, were occupied by military generals. These two positions ensured the military's control of DEPLU's departmental administration. ABRI personnel also held key positions such as Director-General in the Directorate-General for Safeguarding of Foreign Relations and the Director for the Asia-Pacific regional desk.

After DEPLU's reorganisation in 1983, some important posts previously held by military personnel were handed back to civilian career diplomats, but the positions of Secretary-General and Inspector-General were still retained by military men. Moreover, despite the fact that over the years the number of people of military background holding official positions in DEPLU decreased, this did not mean that the influence of the military over DEPLU, and foreign policy-making in general, had also waned. Nor did it indicate that the military was no longer interested in foreign policy. The structure of foreign policy-making through which ABRI's role was mostly exercised remained very much intact. The role of ABRI in determining the course of foreign policy did not derive from those military men holding official positions in DEPLU. Rather, it stemmed from ABRI's central role in Indonesian policy-making. As Weatherbee has pointed out, "critical decisions about foreign policy in general and security policy in particular are made by a small group that is primarily Army in composition."[64]

While there has been occasional "bureaucratic rivalry" between DEPLU and ABRI on a number of policy issues,[65] these two major actors in foreign policy-making generally share the same view regarding the place and role of the Islamic factor in foreign policy. They, and also many other members of Indonesia's traditional foreign policy elite, do not see that Islam should be made an exclusive reference for the conduct of the Republic's foreign policy. In the case of DEPLU, however, it is interesting to note that no one rejects outright the presence of this factor, albeit it is secondary in importance. For example, many DEPLU officials maintain that since Indonesia's foreign policy reflects the domestic aspirations of its constituencies, it would automatically accommodate the aspiration of the Muslims in the formulation of foreign policy. Indeed, this line of argument had been often put forward by DEPLU officials whenever the question of the Islamic factor was raised.[66] The Foreign Ministry's Head of Research and Development Dr. Djohan S. Saleh (subsequently the Indonesian Ambassador to Singapore), for example, maintained that "in principle, there have not been exclusive Islamic considerations in the conduct of Indonesia's foreign policy. However, Islam is well reflected in Indonesia's foreign policy. Islam, for example, is reflected in Indonesia's policy towards the OIC."[67] In other words, he did not see the need to formulate an official and special framework of foreign policy based on Islamic considerations.

The more important underlying factor which guides Indonesian foreign policy, however, is the pragmatic approach with which many foreign ministry officials are more comfortable in defining what constitutes Indonesia's

"national interests." They believe that foreign policy should be conducted first and foremost on the principle of pragmatism and realism. For its implementation, that pragmatism and realism are then to be operationalised in terms of "concentric circles," both in a geographical and functional sense. According to Saleh, Indonesia's participation in regional and international forums, in which ASEAN assumes first priority, is a logical consequence of this approach.[68] It has also been pointed out that since DEPLU understands the non-religious nature of the international system, it realises that there is no need to put an official emphasis on religious elements in foreign policy. For example, it is the principle of pragmatism and realism, in the form of internal economic development, that leads policy-makers to put greater significance on the West in Indonesia's external relations.[69]

Members of the Armed Forces involved in foreign policy-making share the same view as their civilian colleagues in DEPLU. One of ABRI's leading thinkers on foreign policy, for example, acknowledges that Islam has not played an important role in Indonesian foreign policy. He maintains that "Indonesia's foreign policy has been guided not by Islamic considerations, but more by pragmatic and realistic ones."[70] In the eyes of the military, the fact that Indonesia has consistently supported the Palestinian cause in their struggle against Israel was not based on Islamic considerations, but more on the principle of international justice. The same can also be said with regard to Indonesian policy towards Bosnia, where Indonesia's participation in peacekeeping-operations was undertaken under the framework of the United Nations. More interestingly, many military officers also agree with the argument of DEPLU officials that there is no need to base foreign policy on Islamic principles. They generally maintain that Indonesian foreign policy, which is obliged to take into account the domestic realities of Islam as the faith of the majority, has accommodated concerns and aspiration of Islamic groups. No specific examples are cited, however.

Again, as foreign policy-making in Indonesia constitutes the domain of the few, the voices of DEPLU and ABRI as two formal governmental institutions tended to prevail over others. As those voices do not see the need for foreign policy to be exclusively guided by Islamic considerations, it is not surprising that the Islamic factor was relegated to a secondary importance in the conduct of Indonesia's external relations. Moreover, as demonstrated below, the prevalence of non-Islamic voices in foreign policy reflected the place of Islam in the wider context of domestic politics and policy-making of Suharto's New Order. In other words, the marginal position of Islam in politics served as a structural constraint for its role in foreign policy formulation and conduct.

Structural constraint: the marginal position of political Islam

It has been mentioned above that the early years of the New Order marked the beginning of a long difficult period for political Islam in Indonesia. Muslim

groups found that their expectation and hope for a renewed political role were pushed aside by a number of policies introduced by Suharto's New Order government. Political Islam soon became subject to the process of marginalisation, and the strength of Islam as a political force was reduced remarkably. The influence of political Islam was reduced further when the government began to implement a number of measures in its *pembangunan politik* (political development) programmes geared towards the creation of "development-oriented politics" and the uniformity of ideology. The result of this strategy was an authoritarian system in which ideology – except the *Pancasila* – was not permitted to guide political participation.

The first of such measures was the New Order's policy to "regularise" Indonesia's party system. The New Order regime strongly believed that the failure of the pre-1965 period to attain stability was caused by party politics. In the eyes of military leaders, political parties were concerned more with their narrow interests than with the interests of the whole nation. Therefore, the military saw that for stability to be established, it needed "to regularise" a post-1965 Indonesian society imbued with a strong sense of political participation inherited from the Sukarno era. The New Order government expressed its desire to "simplify" (*menyederhanakan*) the party system by limiting the number of political parties into two and one "functional group" (Golkar) as its own electoral machine. The existing political parties, however, still succeeded in maintaining their existence and identities in the general election in July 1971 in which ten parties, including the government-backed Golkar, participated. The general election in 1971 was a drastic failure for political parties, but a massive victory for Golkar, which in turn strengthened the government's grip on power.[71]

With such a reassuring result, the New Order government intensified its attempt to consolidate its dominance in Indonesian politics. In the name of political stability, it soon moved to "simplify" the party system. This task was completed in January 1973 when political parties were forced to merge into two newly formed political parties, the United Development Party (PPP) and the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI).[72] The most controversial measure taken by the New Order was its demands that all mass-based organisations in Indonesia, especially the political parties, accepted *Pancasila* as their sole philosophical foundation (*asas tunggal*).[73] This policy prevented the PPP from claiming itself as an Islamic party and also sealed any future hope for the emergence of an Islamic-based political party. Indeed, the subsequent introduction of a new bill on political parties and Golkar in 1985, which restricted party activity and the number of political parties, weakened further the ability of political organisations to act independently of state control. As a result, the government effectively limited the role of political parties in the political affairs of the nation to subordinate roles.[74] As was the case with other political forces and mass organisations, political Islam also suffered and lost its independence as a potent force.

This New Order's policy of removing politics from sources of ideological contentions and separating the wider society from politics (*depolitisasi*) had as its main objective the neutralisation of the role of religion in politics. However, Muslim groups were convinced that the policy was meant to curb the role of Islam in Indonesian society. Aware of such perceptions, the New Order government encouraged religious activities in a ritual sense to flourish. Since 1975, there has been a spectacular increase in government-sponsored proselytising (*dakwah*) in many areas, especially in Java.[75] There was also a marked increase in the publication of Islamic books and literature. Islamic influence grew in big city's *kampung* and even Jakarta's wealthy suburbs.[76] Examples of such policies can also be seen in government programmes to build a large number of mosques and prayer houses (*mushala*).[77] Indeed, there were striking differences in Suharto's attitudes towards political Islam on the one hand and towards Islam as a religion on the other. In other words, Suharto's New Order government promoted Islam to become a private religion but denied it a public space within which Islamic political aspirations could be expressed. Any attempt by Muslim groups to attain that public political space was suspected and labelled as an anti-government act.

Under such circumstances, Suharto's New Order tried to deny any excuses or cases that could be used by Muslim groups to strengthen their position or to challenge the government. Foreign policy was one important area in which such excuses might be found. Therefore, Suharto's government was obliged to prevent foreign policy issues from becoming a political weapon by engaging "in Islamic occasions and issues in as far as it is necessary to appease Muslim opinion, but not in a way and to an extent which might arouse it."[78] The New Order government was too aware that political issues, including in foreign policy, could be used as a rallying point for Muslim groups in challenging the domestic political order designed to guarantee the continuation of the New Order's grip on power. Even though one of the most impressive achievements of the New Order was the return of foreign policy to its conventional function of advancing external interests of the state, rather than promoting narrow domestic interests of competing political forces, there remained a number of issues which could provide a fertile ground from which Muslim oppositions might launch an attack on the government.

One such issue was the question of Indonesia's normalisation of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Muslim groups in Indonesia, together with the military, consistently opposed any suggestion that Indonesia restore diplomatic ties with China. To that effect, strong opposition by Muslim groups had surely played a part in the government's policy of delaying the normalisation of ties for more than two decades since they were "frozen" in 1967. However, a closer look at the issue suggests that there were in fact other, domestic considerations that influenced the government's attitude, namely, the question of regime legitimacy and national security. Resistance to normalisation with China served to reinforce the government's claim to

legitimacy based on the New Order's role in safeguarding the Republic from communist threat, and China constituted an important element of such a threat.[79] When the Islamic factor – in the form of opposition to normalisation of ties with China – came into the picture, it served only to reinforce the pre-existing position of the New Order government. In fact, when diplomatic ties were finally restored in August 1990, opposition from the Muslim community was still heard. In other words, the case of Indonesia–China relations also suggests that the Islamic factor in foreign policy remained secondary in importance even in cases where Muslim interests were clearly involved.

However, at the end of the 1980s, there were positive signs that the place of Islam in the New Order's domestic political structure was about to change. By the early 1990s, that impending change became more evident and a new era where Islam was given a broader space to participate in the national political discourse began. For its part, Muslim forces saw that after more than two decades of being sidelined, it was time to reclaim their rightful place in the political process. And, as domestic politics in Indonesia are always bound to have parallel implications for foreign policy, Islamic considerations also began to enter foreign policy calculations and have an increasing effect on the Republic's external relations. However, as discussed below, that effect was only felt in the use of foreign policy for domestic political purposes rather than as a fundamental shift in foreign policy orientation and substance. For that matter, full entrance of the Islamic factor into Indonesian foreign policy was constrained by domestic political interests of the regime on the one hand and pragmatic international priority on the other.

Conclusion

The limited presence, if not the absence, of the Islamic factor in foreign policy became manifest when the New Order government came to power in 1967. For President Suharto, the use of foreign policy is seen as a function of domestic politics, directed towards achieving national interests defined largely in terms of economic development. Moreover, while the New Order had no intention of moving Indonesian foreign policy beyond the framework of *bebas-aktif*, it set for itself the task of returning to the 'original' one (*politik bebas-aktif yang sebenarnya*). President Suharto also realised that before Indonesia could pursue the *bebas-aktif* policy on an ideal course, there was an inevitable need for internal reconstruction or *pembangunan nasional* (national development). The formulation and conduct of foreign policy should conform to this internal task and divisive domestic issues were not allowed to intrude. The intrusion of Islam into foreign policy was seen by the New Order as one such issue.

New Order's foreign policy partly reflected the regime's conviction that foreign policy should only function as an instrument of development rather than as a vehicle by which opposition could challenge the government. As

Islam was largely seen as a potential challenge, the government took great care not to allow foreign policy to be dictated by Islamic considerations. Indonesia's relations with Middle East countries in particular, and its response towards issues and problems in the Arab–Islamic world in general, should be understood within that context. It was not unintentional, therefore, that its policies towards the Arab–Islamic world were not framed in terms of co-religionist considerations. That was partly driven by a political reality stemming from the dilemma of dual identity. Moreover, the New Order government maintained that domestic priorities required more attention to be paid to the importance of the Southeast Asian region and the West in foreign policy.

The absence of Islamic voices in foreign policy was also the result of their marginal position within the New Order power structure. In maintaining his grip on power, President Suharto relied heavily on the support of the military and his electoral machine, the secular Golkar. Islam was not permitted to exercise its role as a formal political force. New Order policies in the political field, especially the imposition of *Pancasila* as *Azas Tunggal*, led to an ideological locking up by which Islamic parties were deprived of their Islamic identity. As political Islam was often portrayed as anti-*Pancasila*, its position was marginalised further. Such a marginal position, however, began to undergo a significant change in the early 1990s when President Suharto expanded his power base to include the Muslim community. How such significant change affected the place and influence of Islam in foreign policy is discussed in the next chapter.

5 Islam and foreign policy in the 1990s

Between form and substance

It has been argued in Chapter 4 that Indonesian foreign policy under Suharto's New Order regime was reoriented to serve domestic political and economic interests of the state. In that context, the presence of Islamic dimensions in Indonesian foreign policy during the most part of Suharto's New Order period had been cautiously managed and subject to the government's control. It also reflected the tension between Islam and the state whose origins can be traced back to the process of state-identity formation prior to independence and then during the first decade of the post-colonial period. Fearing that Islam could pose a significant challenge to the New Order regime, President Suharto and the military sought to "sterilise" politics of Islamic content. The government, however, realised also that Islam could not be disregarded entirely. For that reason, the presence of the Islamic factor in foreign policy, albeit limited, was only allowed when it served the interests of the ruling regime.

The role and influence of Islam in politics was not immune to change, however. By the late 1980s, there were signs of the revival of Islamic consciousness in Indonesia. As the economy grew steadily during the first two decades of Suharto's rule, there was also rapid growth of a larger and better-educated Islamic community. This, in turn, was accompanied by growing demands for a stronger political voice, a trend that could no longer be ignored by President Suharto and the New Order regime. Consequently, political change became imperative. For President Suharto, at a time when the support from his traditional power base – ABRI – could no longer be taken for granted, the issue was how to manage such a trend for his political advantage. Consequently, this trend had broad implications for the state–Islam relationship in particular and Indonesia's polity in general. The nature of the Islamic factor and its influence in Indonesian foreign policy in the 1990s is examined within that context.

Islam and the changing domestic context

By the end of the 1980s, changes in the power structure of Indonesian domestic politics were looming. That impending change stemmed from growing signs

that the relationship between the two important political forces which dominated Indonesian domestic politics for more than two decades, namely President Suharto and ABRI, was about to change. Suharto's growing power and influence since the mid-1980s was accompanied by another significant change in the New Order's power structure, namely, the decline of ABRI's power. President Suharto was no longer a *primus inter pares* among the core of ABRI leadership. This was in part due to the strategy of "civilianisation" pursued by Suharto to legitimise his rule through civilian mechanisms such as general elections and the appointments of more and more civilian politicians as members of his Cabinet. If there were still military men in the Cabinet, they were no longer retained on active service and had retired before they were appointed to take up positions in the Cabinet. Consequently, as Suharto gradually moved to the top of the pyramid of power, it became evident that ABRI was no longer in a position to exercise its institutional influence over the President. By the end of the 1980s, Max Lane observed that "ABRI has become increasingly an instrument carrying out general policies which it has no say in formulating."[1]

Suharto's changing relationship with ABRI

An initial sign of the changing Suharto–ABRI relationship, though not yet clear at the time, emerged in February 1988 when the President removed General Benny Moerdani from his position as ABRI's Commander. Suharto's decision was quite surprising, because the replacement took place only one month before the newly formed MPR convened to elect the President and Vice-President and when it was conventional to make such a senior military change. Suharto appointed General Try Sutrisno, his former adjutant and Army Chief of Staff, to replace General Moerdani. The fact that the dismissal came only shortly after General Moerdani's period of active service had been extended for another year by President Suharto in October 1987 indicated that there was another reason than just a "tour of duty" for the decision. Speculation began to circulate that the decision reflected growing tension between ABRI and President Suharto due to the determination of the former to have a greater say in determining the result of the MPR session. It was also widely believed that General Moerdani had begun to voice ABRI's concerns over the possible implications of the business activities of Suharto's children and the question of presidential succession.[2]

However, it was only during the 1988 presidential election that the decline of ABRI's power and influence vis-à-vis Suharto, and the differences between them, became more public. During the 1988 presidential election, some elements within ABRI for the first time expressed disagreement with Suharto publicly. While supporting the re-election of Suharto for the fifth time, ABRI opposed Suharto's decision to choose Lieutenant-General (ret.) Sudharmono as his Vice-President. Many ABRI leaders never regarded Sudharmono, who

spent most of his career in administrative and military-related legal works, as a "real" military man. He was perceived by ABRI as working against its corporate interests during his tenure as state secretary during which he succeeded in elevating the State Secretariat (*Sekneg*) as a new power centre of the New Order, which in turn reduced Suharto's dependence on the support of ABRI.[3]

ABRI's opposition to Suharto's nomination of Sudharmono as vice-president marked the beginning of a significant change in the Suharto–ABRI relationship. It is true that differences between Suharto and other ABRI leaders had occurred in the past. However, such differences mainly existed between Suharto and retired military leaders and more on a personal basis. Moreover, as Max Lane has observed, "discontent in the armed forces [prior to 1988] was not yet reflecting institutional tension with the regime."[4] The current differences, which were in part reflected in the incident during the 1988 election of the vice-president, suggested the nature of the changing Suharto–ABRI relationship on the basis of the separation of ABRI and Suharto as two discrete political forces. Therefore, discontent among ABRI since the end of 1988 has marked the presence of problems, if not friction, between ABRI as an institution on the one hand and Suharto on the other. Thus, by the end of the 1980s, the relationship between Suharto and ABRI was rather strained, with Suharto being more powerful than ABRI.

The growing dissatisfaction of ABRI with Suharto's choice for vice-president continued to manifest itself following the 1988 election. In its attempt to consolidate its place in the centre of national political life, ABRI then moved to concentrate on the Golkar Congress scheduled for November 1988. ABRI was apparently worried that Sudharmono, the incumbent chairman of Golkar, would be re-elected for a second time. Therefore, ABRI wasted no time in re-establishing its strong position within the Golkar leadership. In the run-up to the Golkar Congress, ABRI managed to secure over 70 per cent of the regional representatives to the national Congress.[5] This development brought about some speculation that ABRI wanted to place its own man as chairman of Golkar. However, the issue was resolved when President Suharto nominated another retired general, Wahono, to be the only candidate for the position. The nomination was accepted by the ABRI leadership.

ABRI's opposition towards a vice-president of his own choice, and ABRI's subsequent attempt to strengthen its influence over Golkar, were not lost on Suharto. It is very likely that such attitudes were seen as acts of defiance to Suharto who in turn became suspicious of the trustworthiness of ABRI's support to him. Indeed, it has been pointed out that the President's rivalry with certain segments of the military also intensified in 1989 and 1990, in anticipation of the general election of 1992.[6] There was also speculation that some elements within ABRI continued the attempt to undermine Suharto's credibility, for example, by forging an alliance with other forces outside the

elite, and by raising the question of the business activities of Suharto's family.[7] Aware of the impact such activities might have on him, Suharto was determined to seek a new power base within the society.

Such a new base for support was potentially to be found within the significant segments of Muslim community whose access to political power had long been denied by Suharto's New Order. Suharto began to change his view of the role of Islam in the New Order's society and sought to win support from the Islamic community. An opportunity for Suharto to fulfil that requirement came at the end of 1989 when a group of Muslim activists sought the blessing of the government to establish the Association of Muslim Intellectuals (*Ikatan Cendikiawan Muslim se-Indonesia*, ICMI). When they asked Minister of Research and Technology Bachrudin J. Habibie[8] to head the organisation, Suharto soon gave his approval. He even indicated his willingness to inaugurate the birth of ICMI and served as the Association's "protector" (*pelindung*). ICMI soon emerged as an influential force which tried to bring together every shade of Islam. However, when Abdurrahman Wahid of NU refused to join, ICMI could not escape the impression that it was a modernist Islam's organisation.

Suharto's favourable attitude towards the establishment of ICMI, the first such association ever in Indonesia, might have been motivated by several reasons.[9] The acceptance of *Pancasila* as the sole ideological foundation by the Muslim community is said to have contributed significantly to Suharto's changing view of Islam. At this point, Suharto was convinced that the Muslim community no longer presented a threat to his rule. At the same time, Suharto also saw the growing interest of Muslim groups to regain public space as an opportunity that could be used for broadening his power base. Some Muslim groups even realised the need for Suharto to court Muslim support so as to outflank his rivals in the Army[10] and the need for them to have Suharto's support if they were to enter the national political scene. The establishment of ICMI in 1990 cannot be separated from the context of such mutual interests.

Indeed, Suharto's government soon embarked upon a number of undertakings with results that could not have been more pleasing for the Muslim community. In 1990, he made his much-publicised first pilgrimage to Mecca, an act widely seen as an attempt to establish his Islamic credentials further. Suharto also reversed his government's earlier firm stance on the banning of *jilbab* (head covering) for female students in state-owned schools. The Ministry of Religion presented to Parliament a bill strengthening Islamic courts, published a codification of Islamic family law, and introduced a new marriage law making interfaith marriages practically impossible. Then the controversial national sports lottery, accused as sanctioning gambling by the Muslim community, was abandoned. A major decision was made, with the assistance of ICMI, to open the first Islamic Bank in 1991. By 1992, it became evident that the state and Islam had embraced each other, leaving behind more

than two decades of bitter experience of mutual hostility. Bitter opposition from many quarters, including from within the Muslim community itself (especially from the NU) and influential segments of ABRI, failed to reverse that trend. Indeed, as Indonesia entered the 1990s, "having acquired a new maturity and in search of a new dignity, political Islam seemed to be ready to play the game."[11]

Islam and the struggle from below: defining a new identity

Islamic political resurgence, however, did not begin with the emergence of regime friction within the core structure of Suharto's New Order. Nor did it emerge as a result of deliberate regime policy or as a regime's creation. The Islamic resurgence in Indonesia resulted from the genuine efforts by the Islamic community itself in preserving and strengthening religious consciousness among its constituents. Indeed, it represented a long process of survival under an authoritarian regime that harboured strong suspicions against any religious tones in political life. Excessive state hegemony under the New Order, and the politics of repression against religious politics, made it difficult for many Islamic political movements to express their political activism. In fact, the existence of Islamic political movements itself was restricted by the New Order's government. In that context, the politics of survival through the strengthening of Islamic influence within the society constituted the most delicate struggle faced by many Islamic movements during Suharto's rule. A change in the strategy of survival that began in the mid-1970s – from "the struggle from above" to create a formal political space to that of "the struggle from below" to strengthen religious awareness at community level – finally paid off with the growing sense of renewal within the Islamic community.

Even though the New Order succeeded in reducing its political role, Islam continued to evolve as a social force and play an important role in the society. This was partly due to the strength of Islam as a source of values in the society. Islamic organisations continued to play a significant role as mass-based movements that found strong support from, and served the interests of, the society rather than the state.[12] With few exceptions, many of these Islamic mass organisations paid more attention and devoted their resources to the conduct of social and educational activities in the society. However, even as a social force, Islam in Indonesia has never been homogenous and monolithic. As discussed in Chapter 2, the two largest Muslim organisations in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) still represented two major different streams of Islam in the country.

These two major Islamic organisations used to play an important role in Indonesian political life as well. During the early years after Indonesian independence (August 1945), Muhammadiyah and the NU formed the core members of Masjumi along with other smaller Islamic groups. As mentioned earlier, however, the unity of the party only lasted for about six years. In

October 1952, the NU withdrew from Masjumi and declared itself as a political party. Muhammadiyah stayed as one important pillars of Masjumi until the party was banned by President Sukarno in 1960. In 1968, after the transfer of power from President Sukarno to General Suharto, leaders of Muhammadiyah supported the establishment of a new Islamic political party, Parmusi. Yet, due to internal disputes, at the end they withdrew from the party.[13]

Unlike the NU, however, Muhammadiyah did not transform itself to become a political party. It instead returned to *da'wah* (religious preaching) and concentrated on religious, social, and educational activities. It engaged not only in religious activities, but also in social undertakings such as family welfare, health, income-generating programmes and publications. The broad range of Muhammadiyah's social activities was reflected in various organisation's autonomous bodies charged with special tasks, such as the Council of Economics, the Council of Education and Culture, the Council of Tertiary Education and Research and Development, and others. Muhammadiyah also set up and managed a number of general hospitals, schools, universities, and a boarding house for unfortunate orphans. Many of its members were also able to join civil services. Indeed, since it was not a political party, Muhammadiyah was able to carry out its activities without significant political constraints and obstacles.[14]

The NU carried on as a political party until 1973 when Islamic political parties were finally forced to merge into a single party called the United Development Party (PPP). Within this party, the NU constituted the strongest element. However, after the PPP was controlled by government-backed figures, the position of NU began to be undermined. Its prominent politicians were "purged" from important positions within the party's central executive board. In 1984, NU followed the Muhammadiyah example and withdrew from PPP and politics altogether. It returned to the organisation's initial mission of focusing on religious, social, and educational activities. Under the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid, a grandson of the founder of the NU, this the largest Islamic organisation attempted to redirect its activities away from politics and towards village-level development and educational programmes.[15]

As the result of Suharto's policy of denying a formal place for Islam in politics, other Islamic groups, which also formerly took part in politics, had also turned to religious and social activities. After Suharto refused to rehabilitate the Masjumi party, in May 1967 former leaders of this party formed *Dewan Da'wah Islamiyah Indonesia* (DDII) under the leadership of Mohammad Natsir, former chairman of Masjumi. The main activities of the DDII included promoting *da'wah*, training for preachers, and publications. Even though the DDII is not a political organisation, many of its leaders often expressed critical views of the government. This attitude can in fact be seen as a manifestation of the organisation's mission to carry out *amar ma'ruh*

nahi munkar (encouraging good and forbidding evil).[16] Due to its activities, the DDII managed to establish itself as an important Islamic organisation after the NU and Muhammadiyah with approximately 8 million members. Indeed, only several years after its establishment, the DDII managed to open a large number of branches across the country.

The reorientation in the role and functions of these mass-based Islamic organisations reflected the beginning of a new awareness that Muslims should not merely focus their attention on political affairs, but pay more attention to the development of education and welfare. Indeed, focus on the needs of the wider society helped maintain the influence of these Islamic mass organisations in the society. Despite their primary focus on religious and social activities, however, these Islamic organisations continued to carry important political leverage vis-à-vis the state. As a Muslim intellectual aptly describes:[17]

> The political involvement of those [social] organizations is not in the form of practical politics, such as taking part in general elections and seeking representation in parliament. Their role is acting as interest groups, which attempt to influence the direction of public policies in order to be compatible with Islamic values, without directly becoming involved in practical politics themselves . . . . The interests or aspirations of the Islamic mass organizations are expressed through lobbying, critical views and publications in mass media.

In addition to the role played by Islamic mass organisations, Islam under Suharto's New Order contributed significantly in the process of social transformation through the "new thinking" (*pemikiran baru*) movement initiated by a younger generation of Muslim intellectuals, mostly of modernist background. This new generation of Muslim thinkers, led by Nurcholis Madjid who earned his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, initiated a renewal movement in Islamic thinking. Madjid, who invented the slogan "*Islam, Yes; Islamic political parties, No,*" promoted the view that an Islamic society does not require Islamic political parties. Islam should develop instead new forms of Islamic renewal, especially in the field of education and social welfare, rather than engaging in the quest for state power.[18]

Madjid's powerful ideas, despite initial criticisms from an older generation of Muslim leaders, received strong support from younger Muslim intellectuals. It has been noted, for example, that political views of leading Muslim thinkers such as Dawam Rahardjo, Adi Sasono, and Imaduddin Abdulrahim were in one way or another influenced by Madjid's thinking.[19] More importantly, Madjid's *pembaruan* movement "legitimated the efforts of a larger community of non-party activists seeking to develop new forms of Islamic renewal . . . . It also served to sanction the actions of growing numbers of educated Muslims who, beginning in the mid-1970s, saw fit to take up government service after

finishing their studies."[20] Indeed, the *pembaruan* movement brought about significant change in the attitude of many within the Muslim community towards the state. As Hefner has put it, "rather than quibbling over doctrine or ideological details, Muslims were enjoined to recognize the reality of the New Order and undertake initiatives that could enhance their influence within its institutions."[21]

The sustained role of Islamic mass organisations and the development of new Islamic thinking as described above were then strengthened by – and in many respects contributed to – the emergence of a new Muslim middle class and the revival of Islamic-oriented middle-class politics. As noted by Vatikiotis, this development should be understood as a largely urban and middle-class phenomenon, which can partly be attributed to "the increasing number of Muslim devotee who are joining the ranks of the urban middle class."[22] Liddle has noted also that "the government's economic and cultural policies have led to the rapid growth of a larger, better educated, and relatively prosperous *santri* [devout Muslims] community."[23] Indeed, by the mid-1980s Indonesia was marked by what a Muslim intellectual calls as "Muslim intellectual booming."[24]

The role played by the new generation of Muslim intellectuals and leaders, many of them belonging to the Muslim middle class, had a profound impact not only on the society but also on the characteristics of Islamic political aspirations. Their thinking resulted in the restructuring of the role of Islam in politics. The majority of this new generation of Muslim intellectuals and leaders no longer entertained the idea of turning Indonesia into an Islamic state. However, they began to speak about the need for a greater role for Islam in politics and policy-making. Some of them may have sought to promote the "Islamisation" of Indonesian society. However, the majority of them formulated "the empowerment of the Muslim community" in political and economic terms as their agenda.[25] This agenda was closely linked to their strategy of democratisation which "does not take the form of political agitation, but manifests itself through efforts to increase people's income and education as well as political consciousness."[26]

At this point, it is important to note three significant developments with regard to Islam during the last decade or so of Suharto's rule. First, members of the Muslim middle class were now culturally and intellectually more self-confident than their predecessors. Second, while they believed that there could be no separation between religion and society, including politics and government, they did not support the idea of an Islamic state. Third, there had also been a growing religious awareness among them. In the final analysis, all these three developments contributed to the blurring of the boundaries between *santri* and *abangan*, and between modernism and traditionalism. These contemporary features of Indonesia's Islamic community then became more manifest in the resurgence of Muslim political activism after the resignation of President Suharto in May 1998.[27]

The Islamic dimension of foreign policy in Suharto's final years

Changes in domestic politics had also been matched by parallel developments in foreign policy. Since the end of the 1980s, there had been a gradual improvement in Indonesia's relations with a number of Arab–Islamic states. Signs of Indonesia's increasing interest in improving its relations with these countries had emerged since the mid-1990s.[28] President Suharto's decision to allow the PLO to set up an office in Jakarta in 1989, even though it was then delayed, constituted the most significant change in Indonesia's attitude towards the Organisation. It was argued that by that time, Suharto's New Order government "had decided that the PLO no longer posed a serious threat."[29] More importantly, a greater support for the PLO had been one of the main demands made by Muslim groups in Indonesia. In May 1991, in a show of support, Indonesia contributed Rp. 100 million (approximately US$50,000) to the PLO and 100 tonnes of rice and boxes of instant noodles to the Palestinian people.[30] A special warm welcome was given to Yasser Arafat when he visited Indonesia in 1992 to attend the tenth NAM Summit.

Increased exchanges of visits among high-ranking officials soon became common. In June 1990, for example, Indonesia's Minister of Trade Arifin Siregar visited Iran and met with President Rafsanjani. In September that year, Iran's Vice-President visited Indonesia. In September 1992, President Rafsanjani visited Indonesia and attended the Tenth NAM Summit. In October 1991, Indonesia established diplomatic relations with Libya, a country long suspected to have supported the separatist movement in Indonesia's Aceh province. In August 1996, Turkey's Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan of the Islamic-oriented Refah Party visited Jakarta. During 1993 and 1997, President Suharto himself made four visits to the Middle East region.[31] In November 1993, Suharto visited Tunisia and Iran. In November 1996, he went to Jordan. In June 1997, President Suharto attended the Developing-8 (D-8) Summit in Turkey, a newly formed Islamic organisation which consists of eight Muslim and Islamic states (Indonesia, Bangladesh, Turkey, Iran, Malaysia, Egypt, Pakistan, and Nigeria). In May 1998, Suharto visited Egypt despite the fact that he was facing a mounting challenge by opposition forces at home, which finally forced him to cut short the visit and return to Jakarta.

Similar developments also occurred in terms of trade relations and economic cooperation. There was a steady increase in Indonesia's trade with the region. For example, Indonesia's total export to the region increased from US$698.7 million in 1990 to US$1.6 billion in 1996. In September 1990, Indonesia and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on counter-trade between the two countries. The volume of Indonesia's trade with Jordan doubled in 1995 compared to the previous five years, amounting to US$100 millions.[32] Indonesia's export to Saudi Arabia also increased from US$322.7 million in 1990 to US$515.6 million in 1996. Export to the United Arab

Emirates increased from US$140.8 million in 1990 to US$601.2 million in 1996, while import increased from US$1.3 million in 1990 to US$40.5 millions in 1996.[33] While Indonesia's main trading partners are still in the Asia-Pacific region, such an increase in Indonesia's trade relations with the Middle East countries reflects the Republic's growing economic interests in the region.

Indonesia's status and participation in the Islamic world was enhanced when the Republic finally sought full membership in the OIC in the early 1990s. Unlike in 1972, when Indonesia refused to sign the OIC Charter because of concern that by doing so it would confer itself a status as an Islamic state, this time that question of state identity did not arise. In December 1991, President Suharto for the first time attended the OIC Summit in Senegal. In the 1993 Summit, Indonesia was elected as Chairman of the OIC despite the fact that the government continued to reiterate its non-religious basis of the state. This, nonetheless, clearly reflected the growing acceptance of Indonesia's Islamic credential by other OIC members. It also suggested that the Indonesian government no longer viewed such an undertaking as likely to have any ramifications on domestic politics. On the contrary, it conveniently conformed to the general trend within domestic politics of the rapprochement between Islam and the state. Indeed, Indonesia's larger role in the OIC was pursued when Islam no longer presented a constraint to foreign policy initiatives.

Indonesia's interest in regional issues with identifiable Islamic dimensions in Southeast Asia was also revived in the early 1990s. Such an interest was clearly expressed in Indonesia's intention to solve the Muslim minority issue of Moro in the southern Philippines by way of mediating the conflict. Twenty years after the Tripoli Agreement of 1976, which had never materialised into a conclusive peace agreement, Indonesia was assigned a special task by the OIC to help find a solution to the Moro problem that had become an issue again after the Cory Aquino administration in the Philippines restarted the peace process. Indonesia became a member of the Committee of Six, a special body under the OIC auspices charged with the task of facilitating the peace talks between the MNLF and the Philippine government. After Indonesia was elected as Chairman of the OIC in 1993, it was then officially tasked with the mandate to lead the peace process. Unlike in the early 1970s, this time Indonesia did play its role as a "peace facilitator" well and, after four rounds of talks held in Indonesia between 1993 and 1996, the MNLF and the Philippine government finally reached a concrete agreement to end their conflict in September 1996.

It is widely argued in Indonesia that the Republic's status as a Muslim country but short of an Islamic state constituted an important factor in facilitating its role. "As a Muslim country," a leading Indonesian diplomat participant to the peace process commented, "it is easy for Indonesia to understand how the Muslims in south Philippines feel."[34] However, it is also important to note that for the Indonesian government, that role is also seen within the wider context of its membership in ASEAN. In other words, as the

leading Islamic daily *Republika* commented, "even though it is realised that the religious aspect [of this issue] is evident, the conflict is also seen as a problem of a fellow ASEAN member."[35] For Indonesian Muslims, that role could not have been more pleasing and indeed, it was warmly welcomed and well received by the Muslim community in the country. Indeed, *Republika* regards the coming of peace to the southern Philippines as "a gift from Indonesia's Muslims for the Moro people."[36]

The latest manifestation of these Islamic flavours in foreign policy was Indonesia's membership in the D-8. This organisation, established in 1997, was primarily meant to promote closer economic cooperation among developing Muslim countries. With Indonesia and Malaysia representing Southeast Asia, Pakistan and Bangladesh representing South Asia, Turkey and Iran representing the Middle East, and Egypt and Nigeria representing Africa, the organisation reflected four main cultural traits of the Islamic world: Malay, Persian, Sub continent, and Arab. Even though its members consisted of eight countries, such composition of membership suggested that the organisation's final goal was to foster global cooperation in the Islamic world. Indeed, even though the D-8 was officially defined as an open grouping whose membership and organisation were not based on religion, it was widely seen as one. Erbakan of Turkey described the D-8 as a kind of Islamic United Nations and an economic counterpart to the G-7 group of developed economic powers.[37] Iranian President Rafsanjani, in his speech at the D-8 Summit, also emphasised this Islamic characteristic when he maintained that the establishment of D-8 as a forum for cooperation is seen by Islamic countries as a pressing need.[38] A similar view was also expressed by Egyptian Prime Minister Kamel Ganzouri.[39]

Such a view was also common within Indonesia's Muslim community. It was maintained, for example, that Indonesia's participation in the D-8 is "part of Indonesia's efforts to mobilise economic cooperation, either among Islamic countries or among Third World countries, to counter challenges from the West."[40] The same observer also maintained that "this factor [of economic cooperation] serves as the key to the possibility of realising the unity of Islamic world in a more concrete way in the future."[41] *Republika* also complained about what it sees as the West's cynical view of the D-8, which sees "D" for "Disaster-8" rather than "Developing-8." While considering such a view "frightening," the daily also maintained that by expressing such a cynical view, the West was worried that the D-8 had the potential to bring disaster to them. "However," the daily wrote, "it is better for the D-8 not to be affected by such cynical view . . . . On the contrary, there is no need for the D-8 to see the West as a frightening big enemy that should be destroyed. Because, no matter what, the West is still needed."[42]

Did these developments indicate a greater measure of the Islamisation of foreign policy? An Indonesian scholar has argued that it was difficult to see changes in Indonesian policy toward the Middle East "apart from

developments in Indonesia's domestic politics. The growing influence of 'Islamic lobby' in Indonesia's domestic politics during the 1990s clearly drove [such changes] to occur."[43] However, the important question remained: to what extent have such changes been determined primarily by the Islamic factor or co-religionist considerations? In this regard, it is important to note that foreign policy is rarely determined by a single factor or motivation. In this regard, Indonesian foreign policy is no exception. Moreover, as noted by Leifer, Indonesia's foreign policy tended to be characterised by an important distinction between form and substance.[44] To reveal such a distinction, therefore, it is important to locate the apparent presence of the Islamic factor in Jakarta's foreign policy in the wider context of both domestic politics and external interests.

One manifestation of that wider context was the revival of assertiveness in Indonesian foreign policy which increasingly became evident by the early 1990s. In his August 1990 national address, for example, President Suharto declared that it was time for Indonesia to once again play a more active role in international affairs. After devoting more than two decades of its resources to economic development, the New Order government felt that the time had come for Indonesia to play an international role commensurate with economic success at home. The New Order began to pursue its independent and active (*bebas-aktif*) foreign policy more vigorously by restoring diplomatic ties with China in August 1990, becoming the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement for the period of 1992–1995, and hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in November 1994. Moreover, the New Order's commitment to maintain Indonesia's independence was clearly displayed by the early 1992 decision to dissolve the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) in the aftermath of the Dilli incident when it saw that economic aids had been used by donor countries, especially the Netherlands, to interfere in Indonesian domestic affairs.[45]

Of those initiatives, Indonesia's determination to seek the chairmanship of NAM, an organisation it helped to establish back in the 1960s but had never chaired, constituted one important manifestation of the country's desire to regain its rightful place in the international arena. It served as a reminder that Jakarta used to play a leadership role in the Third World and now was reclaiming that position. Under its leadership, Indonesia was expected to cultivate a new NAM relevant to the international environment of the post-Cold War era and thus restore Indonesia's own image as one of the founding fathers of the Movement.[46] One could not fail to notice that when Islamic elements began to enter Indonesian foreign policy, it coincided with Jakarta's growing interest in becoming the chairman of NAM. It has been noted, for example, that one reason for Indonesia's failure to become chairman of NAM was the lack of support from the member countries because of Indonesia's attitude towards the PLO.[47] The establishment of diplomatic relations with Libya in October 1991 cannot be seen as an element of the Islamisation of

foreign policy, because it was meant to allow Libya to attend the NAM Summit to be held in Jakarta in the following year. This reason was expressed clearly by Foreign Minister Ali Alatas.[48] Improved relations and greater cooperation with Arab countries would surely attract greater support from them. Therefore, it is clear that when the Islamic factor was registered in Indonesian foreign relations, it was defined primarily in terms of Jakarta's interest in becoming chairman of NAM. And, this demonstrated that Suharto's Indonesia still preferred to project its image as a leading member of NAM; a non-religious international identity commensurate with the prescribed state identity in the domestic domain.

The primary importance of Indonesia's intention to play a more active international role, of which the desire to become chairman of NAM was one manifestation, was also reflected in Indonesia's decision to restore diplomatic ties with China. As mentioned earlier, Muslim groups in Indonesia resisted the idea that Jakarta restore diplomatic ties with China. Indonesia's resistance to the normalisation of relations with China was partly, but by no means exclusively, meant to satisfy these Muslim constituencies. However, by the end the of 1980s, the New Order government came to the conclusion that it would be difficult for Indonesia to play a greater international role without direct relations with China. This was clearly demonstrated in the case of the Cambodian conflict.

More importantly, it would not make sense for Indonesia to ignore the status of China as an important Third World country. In the eyes of many other developing countries, Jakarta's attitude towards China had undermined its own credibility as a country committed to the non-aligned principle. Therefore, the New Order government ignored opposition from Muslim groups and restored diplomatic relations with China in August 1990. Again, this episode demonstrates that the desire to play a greater international role took higher priority over religious considerations.[49] Indeed, from the domestic context of foreign policy, Indonesia's improved relations with Arab–Islamic states and the Republic's growing involvement in Islamic events and issues are hardly described as the Islamisation of foreign policy.

The Islamic factor, in the form of co-religious solidarity, did not enter Indonesian policies towards the Gulf War. Indonesia's official position on the Gulf War has been different from that of its Muslim population. On the one hand, a number of Islamic organisations, such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and the Committee for Islamic Solidarity, urged the Indonesian government to play an active role in trying to end the war.[50] On the other hand, the Indonesian government maintained that Indonesia had responded to the Gulf War "proportionally and rationally," namely, by asking the warring parties, especially the USA and Iraq, to stop the war.[51] Foreign Minister Ali Alatas stated that "we cannot step into the Gulf crisis suddenly and offer our solutions to the conflict. We would be kicked out."[52] However, public protests continued and began to be expressed in the form of anti-American demonstrations.

More worrisome for the government, there were a number of bomb threats to the American embassy, the residence of the American Ambassador, and the American-owned Citibank office in Jakarta.[53] There were also efforts to send volunteers to the Gulf with the objective of defending Medina and Mecca, two Islamic holy cities in Saudi Arabia.[54]

Suharto's government, probably worried that the war might stir up further anti-American and anti-Western sentiment among Indonesian Muslims, argued that the conflict was not a war of religion or a war between Islam and Christianity or the West, but it was simply a war between the USA and Iraq.[55] A number of leading *ulema* (Islamic scholars) also warned that the war was not driven by religious motives but more by personal ambitions.[56] Security authorities arrested a number of people involved in a demonstration in Bandung against the Allies.[57] To demonstrate its reluctance to be involved in the war, the Indonesian government refused to comply with Saudi Arabia's request to send volunteers, arguing that Indonesia did not have the tradition of sending volunteers overseas except as part of a UN peacekeeping force.[58] It continued to stress the declaratory policy of calling for the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait on the one hand and of urging the USA to guarantee the settlement of other major problems in the region on the other.[59] The operational form of that policy, however, was influenced by conscious efforts to avoid deep involvement in a conflict that might create an impression that Indonesian foreign policy was dictated by co-religionist considerations.

The outbreak of civil war in Bosnia – an area which was part of Yugoslavia – presented a similar situation where the Indonesian government was once again obliged to reconcile the non-religious identity of the state on the one hand and enormous domestic pressures to side with the Bosnian Muslims against the Serbs on the other. That delicate exercise came to a test when Malaysia, at the Tenth NAM Summit held in September 1992 in Jakarta, demanded that Serbia be named as an aggressor. Indonesia strongly disagreed and the proposal was dropped.[60] As the "ethnic cleansing" by the Serbs continued, however, the government had to respond to growing pressure from Islamic groups that Indonesia take concrete steps to help the Bosnians.[61] They also urged the OIC to take an active role to stop Serbian aggression against Bosnia-Herzegovina and to protect Bosnian Muslims.[62] A group of students formed an organisation called Indonesia's Youth Movement for Defending Bosnia (GMIPB), and planned to send 1,500 volunteers to Bosnia to fight on the Muslim side.[63] Such strong reactions clearly suggest that for many Indonesians, the religious dimension was in fact ingrained in the Bosnian conflict.

Indeed, such demands forced the Indonesian government to take a stronger stance. In June 1993, for example, President Suharto demanded that arms embargo to the Bosnian Muslims be lifted.[64] The Indonesian government also embarked upon more active diplomatic efforts in showing its support to the Bosnians. However, Indonesia was not prepared to go beyond diplomatic

support when the government declined a request by Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic to send its armed forces there.[65] It also continued to resist the idea of allowing volunteers to be sent to Bosnia[66] and was only prepared to send twenty-five military observers.[67] However, due to continued pressure from the Muslim community, including from the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI), that Indonesia should do more to help by sending troops,[68] the Indonesian government finally decided to send a 200-strong medical detachment to Bosnia as part of the UN peacekeeping force in July 1994.

In March 1995, as an act of showing even greater support for the Bosnian Muslims, President Suharto made a brief stopover in Sarajevo, the besieged capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and met with President Alija Izetbegovic.[69] President Suharto also reiterated Indonesia's readiness, if asked, to play a role as a "facilitator" for peace talks. In what seemed to be an attempt to play down the Islamic factor in its policy, however, government spokesmen repeatedly and consistently emphasised the status of Indonesia as the chairman of NAM in giving its support for Bosnia.[70] This attitude was different from the expectation of many Muslim leaders that Indonesia, for example, sent its troops under the auspices of the OIC.[71] Again, as in other cases, Indonesian policy towards the Bosnian conflict demonstrates that Suharto's foreign policy continued to rely on a declaratory policy that satisfied the Muslim's demands on the one hand, and on an operational policy that preserved the non-religious identity of the state on the other.

New developments in Indonesian relations with Israel at the end of 1993 served as further evidence of the pragmatic nature of Suharto's foreign policy. To the surprise of many people, in October 1993 President Suharto received Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who visited Indonesia for the first time. One may argue that Suharto's visit to Iran a month later was meant to "neutralise" the controversy aroused by Rabin's visit to Jakarta.[72] However, one might also argue precisely the opposite, that Rabin's visit had been carefully planned in order to avoid the wrong impression about the intention of Suharto's following month's visit to Iran. Whatever the real motives behind the controversial meeting, however, the government explanation that Suharto met Rabin in his capacity as the chairman of NAM once again demonstrated that Indonesia valued its non-religious identity. More importantly, it also suggests that the visit was possible because Suharto no longer saw the Islamic factor as a constraint to his foreign policy initiative. In fact, the visit could serve as a convenient tool for Suharto to test the attitude and trust of the Muslim community towards him especially when he began to embark upon a more accommodating policy towards Islam in domestic politics.

Indeed, if there was greater inclusion of Islamic content into Indonesian foreign policy during the later years of Suharto's New Order, there was also evidence that such Islamic content was expressed only in form, not in substance. By injecting a measured dosage of Islamic content into foreign relations, Suharto gained two political benefits with one strike. First, any

improvement in Indonesia's engagement with Islamic issues and Arab–Islamic countries would surely receive a warm welcome from the Muslim community. This in effect would strengthen political support from Muslim constituencies, which was at the time needed by Suharto in his attempt to strengthen legitimacy and broaden his power base. Second, closer relations with Arab–Islamic states would also improve Indonesia's image as a leading Third World country and, more importantly, a non-aligned country. If the distinction between form and substance constitutes a primary feature of Indonesian foreign policy, it can be concluded that while Indonesia's increased involvement in international Islamic occasions and issues and the improvement in the Republic's relations with Arab–Islamic states constitute the form, it was the aspiration to become the chairman of NAM that served as the substance.

In other words, Indonesia's approach towards the Arab–Islamic countries and its involvement in issues with Islamic dimensions was still carried out within two important parameters, namely, the imperative to play a more active international role and the preservation of its non-religious identity of the state. Moreover, the primacy of domestic political considerations, which foreign policy is meant to serve, remains evident. The apparent "Islamisation" of foreign policy, if any, was in the main meant to serve the domestic political purposes of the regime. In the external context, it was meant to serve the larger foreign policy objective of restoring the international identity of the state. Nevertheless, regardless of whatever domestic and external functions it may serve, Indonesia's foreign policy during the later years of Suharto's New Order suggested that Islam did have the potential and capacity to influence foreign policy.

More importantly, that influence appeared to have been greater when the Islamic factor became more significant in the domestic power configuration and political struggle. It suggests that the entrance of the Islamic factor into foreign policy could serve an important function of political legitimisation in the domestic context. Likewise, it also suggests that power legitimisation in domestic politics can be attained in part through foreign policy initiatives towards the Arab–Islamic states and also through greater attention and involvement in issues with Islamic dimensions throughout the world. To that effect, while it continued to exercise some constraints, the Islamic factor served also as a source of motivation for the government's foreign policy initiatives. And, the carefully managed entrance of the Islamic factor into foreign policy was made possible by the corresponding internal political change in the relationship between Islam and the state, and President Suharto exercised supreme authority over the course and direction of that change.

Islam and the fall of Suharto

Suharto's ability to exercise supreme authority over the direction of change in Indonesian politics, however, began to face a serious challenge by the

mid-1990s. The people's patience in witnessing Suharto's enormous personal power – exercised by the President, his family, and cronies across the country – was reaching the limit. The style of the President, the expansion of his family business, and the unlikelihood of his stepping down soon, began to irritate even his loyal followers within the military and bureaucracy. Open criticisms from elite circles, especially within the middle class and intellectuals, were increasingly directed at President Suharto and his family. The fact that President Suharto himself had become the direct target of such criticisms – something that rarely occurred since the crackdown on opposition in 1974 – suggested the extent to which public opposition to him had developed.

Despite such growing resentment, however, few would have thought at the time that mid-1996 signified the beginning of the end of Suharto's era and his New Order government. That beginning was marked by the regime's move to oust Megawati Sukarnoputri from her position as Chairperson of Indonesia's Democratic Party (PDI) by supporting a rival faction in what looked like an "internal friction" among the Party's leadership. Megawati, however, chose to fight on by insisting that she was still the legitimate leader of PDI. The party's office became the "headquarters" for those who supported Megawati. When the place turned into a *mimbar bebas* (free podium), where political speeches with anti-Suharto and anti-government messages were staged by opposition forces on a daily basis, Suharto and the military simply moved to take over the party's office by force on 27 July 1996. Riots soon ensued in parts of Jakarta and the military quickly resorted to repressive means to suppress the protest.

The situation worsened by the end of 1997 when the economic crisis, which had already begun in July 1997 in neighbouring Thailand and also in South Korea, swept Indonesia. Despite growing challenge to his rule, however, President Suharto was re-elected again as Indonesia's president for the seventh time in March 1998. When Suharto surrounded himself with a Cabinet comprised of members of his family and cronies, he certainly misjudged the extent of opposition against his regime. The students, who had begun to demonstrate demanding the resignation of Suharto in early 1998, stepped up their pressure and popular support for their movement, especially among urban professionals, grew rapidly. The shooting of four students at the University of Trisakti on 12 May was soon followed by mass riots on 13–15 May. On 21 May, President Suharto abruptly announced his resignation and Vice-President B. J. Habibie was sworn in as Indonesia's third president.

As public opposition against Suharto's rule escalated, his ability to offer the power of patronage to important sections of the Muslim community did not help to prevent his downfall. In fact, Islamic forces played an instrumental role in bringing down Suharto's regime. As other leading opposition figures, such as Megawati and Abdurrahman Wahid, tended to play a low-profile role in opposing Suharto, Amien Rais, Chairman of Muhammadiyah, stood as the most prominent and popular opposition leader due to his repeated calls for

major political and economic reforms, including Suharto's departure from power. When Suharto, as a last attempt, tried to garner support from the Islamic community by inviting nine key Islamic leaders to his palace after the mass riots, they all refused to endorse the President and called for his resignation instead. More importantly, the Muslim Student Action Front (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia*, KAMMI) played a major role in the anti-Suharto student movement.[73]

For Islamic forces, both the traditionalists and modernists, the downfall of Suharto's regime clearly presented an opportunity to return to politics in a formal sense. As mentioned earlier, the marginalisation of Islam from formal political process under the New Order era was a bitter lesson for many Islamic political activists. In a broader context, the need to maintain the political space at national level, in which Islam can play a major role, serves as a key element of Islam's "corporate interests." At a more operational level, such interests can be best guaranteed if Islam, through its leaders, has the opportunity to occupy key positions in state institutions. In other words, the formal place for Islam in politics can be assured only if Islam itself holds state power and, consequently, becomes an unalienable part of the state. Indeed, the involvement of key Islamic leaders such as Abdurrahman Wahid, Amien Rais, and others in politics reflects such fundamental interests. Political Islam, whose access to politics and power had long been denied, was now about to make a comeback to the national political stage. When the newly installed President Habibie also sought to cultivate an Islamic image, as part of his attempt to broaden his power base and legitimacy, the importance of the Islamic factor in Indonesian domestic politics seemed to be confirmed.

Conclusion

Indonesian foreign policy, as demonstrated in this chapter, has always been subject to domestic political developments and priorities. Indeed, while any country's foreign policy begins at home, the extent to which foreign policy has been dictated by domestic political imperatives is striking in Indonesia. As demonstrated in the case of the relationship between Islam and foreign policy under Suharto, the relative absence of Islamic voices in foreign policy was linked to the fact that it was constrained by the inclination of Suharto's New Order's policy of denying the public space for Islam to articulate its political interests. Suharto believed that foreign policy issues, if not handled with great care, could also provide a fertile ground upon which attacks against government policies could be launched by Islamic forces. The case of Palestine and diplomatic ties with China were illustrative in this regard.

Even during the later years of the New Order, when Suharto began to accommodate Islamic political interests, religious considerations remained secondary – if not absent – in his foreign policy. Indonesian foreign policy continued to be dictated by the logic of domestic political legitimacy through

economic performance. Maintaining close and good relations with the West and non-Islamic international financial institutions still found prominent expression in foreign policy. The aspiration of some Islamic segments that Indonesia should begin to explore and promote closer relations with the Arab–Islamic world was not translated into the actual conduct of foreign relations. Islamic voices in foreign policy-making remained marginal.

As a political force, however, Islam began to move to the centre stage of national politics with the fall of Suharto in May 1998. Moreover, Suharto's hand-picked successor, President Habibie, relied on support from some segments of the Islamic movements and ruled by presenting a more reconciliatory face towards Islam in domestic politics. When President Habibie was replaced by Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of the largest Islamic organisation in the country, the "Islamic turn" in politics seemed to have come full circle. In such a changing domestic context, to what extent would Islam influence Indonesian foreign policy in the post-Suharto era? More significantly, would the Islamic factor find a more substantial and strident expression in both Habibie's and Wahid's foreign policy?

6 Islam and foreign policy after Suharto

Change, continuity, and Islamic consolidation

This chapter analyses the role of Islam in Indonesian foreign policy since the fall of Suharto, especially during the presidencies of B. J. Habibie and Abdurrahman Wahid. This period witnessed the growing role of Islam in politics and policy-making during Indonesia's difficult transition towards democracy. After the fall of President Suharto in May 1998, Islam managed to exercise and exert a significant impact on Indonesian politics. Even though the language of Islam became instrumental in the quest for legitimacy and power, the growing role of Islam in domestic politics was not followed by any significant changes in the non-religious character of Indonesian foreign policy. President Habibie, forced by the need to cultivate an image as an Islamic leader as the basis of his legitimacy, did seek to project a degree of Islamic character into foreign policy. However, that projection was severely constrained by the reality of domestic weaknesses beset and aggravated by tremendous economic and political crises at home. In that context, when the Islamic dimension in foreign policy appeared to be invoked, it was only meant to serve the legitimacy and political interests of Habibie's regime. The substance of foreign policy, which accorded high priority to the quest for external help in facilitating economic recovery, continued to reflect the political reality of domestic weakness.

The election of Abdurrahman Wahid as Indonesia's fourth president in October 2000 once again demonstrated the instrumental role of Islam in shaping Indonesian politics. A coalition of Islamic political parties managed to thwart the rise of secular-nationalist leader Megawati Sukarnoputri to the presidency, despite the fact that her party received the largest vote in the June 1999 general elections. However, the success and ability of Islam to project itself as a united front proved to be fragile and short-lived. While the election of Wahid as Indonesia's fourth president demonstrated the significant impact of Islam on Indonesian politics, his tenure soon proved that Islam in Indonesia remained a plural and divisive political force. As President Wahid attempted to reconcile the imperative of an Islamic image in politics and his strong belief in a secular state identity, contradiction soon became the main characteristic of Wahid's rule. In that context, the conduct of Wahid's foreign policy,

reflected in his erratic attempt to balance the Islamic and non-religious character of foreign policy, served as a dividing factor rather than a unifying one. The reality of domestic politics, and the nature of Indonesia as a state with dual identity dilemma, continued to serve as a domestic weakness that limited the expression of Islam in foreign policy.

The Islamic basis of Habibie's rule

Habibie's rise to power would not have been possible without Suharto's personal backing. It has been mentioned earlier that despite objection from important segments of the Indonesian military and nationalist groups, Suharto himself hand-picked Habibie as Vice-President in March 1998. In doing so, especially at the time when challenges to his rule were increasingly becoming more acute, President Suharto apparently wanted to demonstrate that he was still firmly in charge. Such an impression was indeed almost validated when the MPR voted unanimously for his re-election for the seventh time. Owing his political fortune to Suharto's personal protection, Habibie's election as Vice-President was also confirmed by the MPR's unanimous vote.

Both Suharto and the MPR clearly misread the level of opposition against the New Order when the political and economic situation turned from bad to worse after his re-election as president in March 1998. Despite the attempts by security forces to contain them, student demonstrations grew stronger and quickly spread across the country. The challenge to Suharto's New Order regime became serious when the student-initiated anti-Suharto movement drew strong support from civil society forces and important sections of Indonesia's middle class. Following the worst riots on 12–14 May, Suharto's last attempt to secure his power by offering a cabinet reshuffle failed when fourteen of his economic ministers tendered their resignations.[1] Even though the military, especially the Army Special Forces (Koppassus) and the Strategic Army Reserves (Kostrad),[2] was prepared to crack down on the opposition movement, President Suharto finally resigned on 21 May 1998, and Vice-President B. J. Habibie was sworn in as Indonesia's third president.

As Habibie's rise to power was made possible mainly by Suharto's personal backing, and without the fully-pledged endorsement of the military, many predicted that he would not be in power for too long. Moreover, he was Suharto's Vice-President, thus an important element of the New Order regime that the pro-democracy forces sought to topple. However, the fact that Habibie managed to stay in power for eighteen months, from May 1998 until his downfall in October 1999, clearly suggests that the man was not without a significant power base. Indeed, the Habibie government was supported by important segments of the Islamic community, especially from the modernist wing. It was his link to modernist Islamic groups that saved him from being removed from power at the same time as Suharto – whom Habibie often referred as "Mr. SGS" (Super Genius Suharto).

The strongest supporter of Habibie's regime was none other than the ICMI, an organisation he headed as the general chairman from its inauguration in December 1990 to March 1998. Upon his appointment as vice-president, Habibie drew many of his close aides from within ICMI and its think tank, the Centre for Information and Development Studies (CIDES). Indeed, Habibie himself had made clear his reliance on ICMI when he appealed that, after becoming vice-president, "ICMI must not leave me alone in the golden cage."[3] Soon after taking over power from Suharto, President Habibie also rewarded key cabinet positions to ICMI-affiliated figures such as Adi Sasono, Fahmi Idris, Rahadi Ramelan, Soleh Solahuddin, A. M. Saefuddin, and Akbar Tanjung. It has been noted also that "ICMI and its leadership have made no bones about their support for Habibie."[4]

Support for Habibie also came from important segments of Golkar, Suharto's former party. Since the early 1990s, many people affiliated to ICMI had been more involved in Golkar. When Habibie became President, many of them, such as Adi Sasono and Marwah Daud Ibrahim, were appointed to the executive board of the Party. While the role of secularised nationalist groups remained strong in Golkar, pro-Muslim activists increasingly played a more significant role in the party. The Chairman of Golkar Akbar Tanjung, while trying to balance and accommodate both groups, was himself a former leader of a politically powerful student organisation, the Association of Muslim Students (HMI). Like many others in Golkar, Akbar Tanjung was a Suharto supporter who quickly turned into a Habibie loyalist, and presented himself as a more Muslim-oriented nationalist leader.

Political circumstances surrounding Suharto's downfall had also prompted many other Islamic groups to throw their support behind President Habibie. One such group was KISDI, an organisation affiliated with Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah (DDI). KISDI, which had backed Habibie's candidacy as vice-president earlier, also strongly supported Habibie as Suharto's successor as president. Such support was clearly demonstrated on 22 May 1998 when members of KISDI staged a rally at the National Assembly. A banner carried at the event read: "Opposition to Habibie = Opposition to Islam."[5] As acknowledged by Chairman of KISDI Ahmad Sumargono, "for several times KISDI defended BJ Habibie openly by facing eye to eye those groups trying to undermine the legal government."[6]

As the main basis of support for Habibie came from Islamic groups, an impression was soon created that under his presidency Indonesia would soon undergo a process of Islamisation.[7] Others, however, believed that "it would be a mistake to think that the primary agenda [of ICMI] was Islamic."[8] Moreover, Habibie was aware that he also needed to rely on institutional powers and formal political forces, especially the military, to cement his authority.[9] For that reason, he had to avoid being seen by the military as a biased president, especially in religious terms. Indeed, despite the attempt by President Habibie to cultivate and expand his Islamic power base, he

continued to acknowledge and maintain the non-Islamic character of the Indonesian state. In June 1998, for example, President Habibie made it clear that Indonesia "will never adopt a single official religion because it regards all religion as equal."[10] He also guaranteed that Indonesia would never declare itself as an Islamic state. And, Indonesian foreign policy under President Habibie continued to reflect the acknowledgement of both the reality of domestic weakness and the dilemma of dual identity of the Indonesian state.

Foreign policy of President Habibie: the dilemma of internal weaknesses

Indonesian foreign policy under Habibie's transitional government did not depart significantly from that of Suharto. The growing role of Islamic forces in domestic politics, and the importance of Islam as Habibie's main power base, was not followed by significant changes in the non-religious character of Indonesian foreign policy. This, among others, can be seen in the case of public responses to the IMF's role in Indonesia, the perceptions and attitude of the general public towards the West in general and the USA in particular, and the absence of distinctive Islamic voices in the official foreign policy of Habibie's government. On the contrary, despite his declaratory intent to cultivate closer relations with the Middle East, Habibie continued to maintain good relations with, and relied on financial support from, the IMF and the USA in particular and the Western world in general.

Domestic problems also remained the main priority in the agenda of Habibie's government. Indeed, his government was faced with the tremendous challenge of overcoming severe economic crisis, managing political transition, and restoring public security and order. As economic recovery was very much dependent upon external help, foreign policy was bound to be dictated by such dependence. More importantly, President Habibie was also faced with the problem of legitimacy, in which Islam was expected to serve as an important source for support. For that purpose, President Habibie needed to inject a sense of Islam into his policy, including in foreign policy. In other words, domestic weaknesses and priorities, as well as the regime legitimacy and interests, continued to serve as a defining factor in foreign policy. In that context, however, whenever the Islamic dimension in foreign policy appeared to be invoked, that was only meant to serve the legitimacy and political interests of Habibie's regime.

The dilemma facing Habibie's government in reconciling the gap between Islamic aspiration on the one hand and the regime's interests on the other was reflected, among others, on the question of the role of the IMF in Indonesia and the attitude towards the United States in particular and the West in general. In dealing with that dilemma, the foreign policy of Habibie's government continued to maintain some elements of continuity with Suharto's previous foreign policy.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF): resented, but needed

Indonesia has been known as a country where nationalism constitutes an important element in domestic politics. Therefore, excessive dependence on external forces, such as the IMF, is bound to attract strong domestic response. Such response was expressed, for example, in the form of a demonstration in front of the US Embassy in Jakarta in June 1998. The demonstrators, a group of Muslim youth called *Generasi Muda Untuk Pembangunan Indonesia* (Young Generation for Indonesian Development), accused the US government of interfering in Indonesia's internal affairs by delaying the restart of a US$43 billion economic bailout plan for Indonesia by the IMF that was put on hold after the May riots and the resignation of President Suharto. The demonstrators also accused Washington of funding anti-(Habibie's) government groups. A few days earlier, a group of protesters pulled the American flag from outside the US Consulate and tore it up.[11] These demonstrations were only two of similar anti-American protests that took place in 1998 after the country was hit by the worst economic crisis in decades.

Strong reactions were also expressed by DDII. Its publication, *Media Dakwah* (*MD*), for example, wrote that "in order to receive dollars which is very much needed, Indonesia is willing to be dictated by the IMF for a number of issues."[12] *MD* also wrote that by accepting help from the IMF, "sovereignty to determine our own fate has been sold." While bitterly acknowledging that Indonesia had no choice, it had to agree that the IMF "is the most realistic [choice]. If that choice is not taken and Indonesia showed confrontation to the IMF . . . the condition could worsen."[13] However, *MD* maintains, "regardless of whatever agreement is reached between Indonesia and the IMF, it has to be acknowledged that Indonesia has fell into an 'IMF scenario' which makes it difficult to break away from the trap of global imperialism."[14] In that scenario, *MD* argues, the IMF has functioned as an instrument of US foreign policy of sustaining its hegemony in the Asia-Pacific, in the face of challenges from the yellow peril, by bringing down the economy of regional countries, including Indonesia.[15]

Other groups took a more moderate line in voicing their impatience towards the USA. On 4 May 1998, for example, a Consortium of 257 private Islamic universities (*Badan Kerjasama Perguruan Tinggi Swasta Islam*) sent a letter to President Clinton urging him to force the IMF to release the money soon.[16] A few days later, leaders of several major Islamic youth organisations (such as Muhammad Iqbal Assegaf of *Anshor*, Hajrianto Tohari of *Muhammadiyah Youth*, Andi Muhammad of *Angkatan Muda Islam*, and Idrus Marham of *Remadja Masdjid Indonesia*) demanded the government take a clear stand on the IMF. They also affirmed strong support if the government finally decided to refuse the package altogether. Assegaf, for example, asked President Suharto (at the time) to take a firm stand against the IMF's attitude of delaying the package. He also warned the IMF not to interfere in Indonesia's internal affairs.[17]

The most direct suggestion that the government should change its foreign policy orientation came from Smith Alhadar, a Middle Eastern watcher. Writing in *Republika*, a daily affiliated with the President Habibie-led ICMI, Alhadar suggested that Habibie should not wait for IMF's help. Instead, he suggested, it is time for the President "to visit oil-rich Arab countries because those [Arab] countries know Habibie well and also admire him." For them, "BJ Habibie has become a symbol of the revival of science and technology in the Islamic world." Therefore, Alhadar was convinced that it would not be difficult for the President to seek financial help from Arab countries. Alhadar also maintained that "political support from Arab countries for Habibie's government would help Indonesia to break from 'isolation,' which in turn will encourage other countries to help our countries." More importantly, Alhadar pointed out that closer ties with Islamic countries would help improve Habibie's position both in domestic and international politics.[18]

However, it would be misleading to conclude that such sentiment reflected an acute and widespread anti-Western feeling in the country. In fact, all these voices only partly represented a general sentiment in Indonesia at the time, especially towards the IMF. Such sentiment had been triggered more by the IMF's decision to delay the release of the aid package to Indonesia. This decision was seen as an act that could worsen the economic and political situation in the country. Opposition figure Sri Bintang Pamungkas, for example, argued that "if we understand that the IMF was involved in toppling Soeharto, and the IMF also wants to topple Habibie by saying that it does not want to provide money to a high-risk country – and also by punishing a country which violates human rights and is militaristic – Habibie should know this. Why wait for the IMF?"[19] Economist Sritua Arief, who saw Indonesia's acceptance of the IMF money as a move that "brought Indonesia further into debt trap,"[20] strongly stated that "we do not need to beg from Western countries. Because, we can be eaten by them . . . The IMF wants to give us money because [by doing that] it will get even more money. So, don't trust the IMF. Who says that without the IMF we will die?"[21] However, neither Pamungkas nor Arief suggested where the needed money should come from.

Others, while registering their reservations towards the IMF's attitude, still acknowledged that Indonesia had indeed no choice but to wait for the aid package from the IMF. Amien Rais, for example, suspected that the IMF's decision to delay the package indicated the financial institution wanted to fool Indonesia. According to Amien, "it is not without ground if we suspect the IMF's good intention to help Indonesia, because when we really need the help, the IMF always postponed [the package] with obscure reasons and seems to interfere in our sovereignty."[22] Unlike Pamungkas and Arief, however, Amien acknowledged the importance of the IMF for Indonesia when he stated that "if we say goodbye to the IMF, and try to look for other alternatives, this [attitude] could bring negative (consequences for us). Because, if the IMF

no longer trusts Indonesia, of course other financial institutions will not trust us also."[23]

Amien's view was shared by Adi Sasono, the Minister for Co-operatives, and Small and Medium Enterprises in Habibie's Cabinet. Sasono stated that "to be frank, without the IMF, we will suffer more."[24] Demand that the IMF should not delay the disbursement of the aid further was also expressed by Abdurrahman Wahid, leader of the 35 million-strong Islamic organisation Nahdlatul Ulama, when he met Hubert Neiss, the IMF Director for Asia-Pacific Affairs. Wahid also warned the IMF not to link the aid package with Indonesia's domestic political problems.[25] Similar criticisms were also heard from many economists. Didik Rachbini, for example, criticised the IMF as "an international institution responsible for the stability of world monetary [system], does not seem to have moral responsibility by letting the economic condition [of Indonesia] uncertain since a year ago." Rachbini also maintained that "after almost one year following the idea suggested by the IMF, Indonesia's economy had not improved, but worsened."[26] Another economist, Rizal Ramli, warned that inviting the IMF could worsen Indonesia's economy. He pointed out that the experience of some countries suggested that IMF help brought about negative impacts such as the contraction of the economy, the fall of purchasing power, and an increase in poverty. According to Ramli, there was no guarantee that the IMF would function as a saviour.[27] Similar sceptical views were also shared by some NGO activists.[28]

However, domestic criticisms of the IMF subsided when it began to release the money. When the IMF decided to release US$1 billion in mid-July 1998 and the same amount the following August, the decision was welcomed with relief. In its editorial, ICMI-affiliated newspaper *Republika*, for example, welcomed the decision by characterising it as "very important for Indonesia's government."[29] This episode clearly suggests that what was being questioned here was not the issue of dependence on aid from the West or its financial institution per se, but more on what was perceived as a condition of "domestic helplessness" which might be exploited and manipulated by foreign forces, in this case the IMF. Due to the fact that such common feeling was widely expressed primarily in a time of crisis, not only within important segments of the Islamic elite but also within the public in general, it can be said that such an attitude reflected more an expression of nationalism and national pride than an expression of xenophobia. Nor did it reflect an inherent and deep-seated anti-Western or anti-American attitude. This, however, did not suggest that the feeling of distrust and suspicion of the West in general and the USA in particular was totally absent in the Indonesian society.

The United States of America: between distrust and exigency

It is important to note that the general public attitude towards the West in general and the USA in particular has not undergone significant change. The

Indonesian public, both the elite and the society at large, has always seen the USA with mixed feelings of both distrust and exigency. On the one hand, the USA is perceived as a country whose help is very much needed by Indonesia. General acceptance of the IMF aid package, for example, reflects that feeling even though that institution is often seen as an instrument of American foreign policy in imposing its ideology and political interests.[30] American democracy and political process, with some qualifications, remain a source of inspiration for pro-democracy leaders in the country. They argue that while it might be imperfect, some elements of American democracy might be useful in the Indonesian democratisation process. For example, Amien Rais's suggestion that Indonesia should adopt a direct presidential election, and also his proposal that presidential candidates should engage in a public debate, are inspired by the similar process in the USA.[31] With regard to the importance of the principle of honesty in democratic politics, he encourages Indonesia "to learn from the most advanced democracies such as the United States."[32] Amien also admires the West for their effective measures and commitment to eradicate corruption.[33]

On the other hand, however, the USA is also seen as a force that tends to interfere in Indonesia's internal affairs. This perception can be found not only among the Muslim society but also among almost all spectrums of the society. Within the Muslim community, the strongest voice is to be found within two organisations, DDII and KISDI. Through its publication, *Media Dakwah*, DDII often expresses the most critical views of the West, especially the USA. The USA, for example, is perceived as a major force behind the IMF and the World Bank.[34] These two financial institutions are considered responsible for the growing gap between rich and poor in Indonesia. It also regularly criticises US support for Israel and opposition to Palestinian nationalism. More specifically, DDII has always been critical of what it sees as Indonesia's excessive openness towards the West.[35] KISDI, as mentioned earlier, is also critical of the West and the USA along the same lines as DDII. During the height of the economic crisis, for example, KISDI condemned what it saw as "an act of interference in Indonesia's internal affairs, [which] is done in a blatant way and has diminished [Indonesian] national pride as a sovereign nation" by the USA and other Western countries.[36]

A degree of distrust of the USA is also prevalent among those considered moderate Islamic forces by many in the USA. Abdurrahman Wahid, for example, in responding to air strikes by the US against Iraq, maintained that a superpower always tried to force its will upon the weaker and poorer countries.[37] President Wahid also expressed his conviction that the USA played an active role supporting the ongoing student demonstrations against Habibie's government. In an interview with the Netherlands-based Hilversum radio station on 13 December 1998, he accused the US government (Central Intelligence Agency, CIA) of providing financial support to the students through Unilever, a Dutch-owned company operating in Indonesia.[38]

President Habibie was also known to have expressed a curious and interesting view of the West when he was still a minister in Suharto's Cabinet. According to Habibie, Suharto "used to depend on the IGGI and all sorts of donor countries."[39] This, Habibie maintained, prevented Suharto from expressing his commitment to the struggle of the Islamic community publicly. Habibie also expressed his agreement with an analysis by an Egyptian scholar, Fahmi Quwaidzi, that Suharto needed the capital from the West to build Indonesia. Therefore, Habibie concluded, "Pak Harto had to look to the West with the consequence that progress of Islam in Indonesia became stagnant."[40] That attitude, according to Habibie, began to change in February 1991, however. When asked about this change, Habibie revealed that Suharto had told him "it is time now for us to be independent. Now we can pursue the national development independently."[41] Therefore, in Habibie's view, due to his independence of the West, Suharto no longer feared that the West would react negatively if he showed his commitment to the Islamic cause more publicly. Because, Habibie maintained, "now, if they [Western donor countries] want to pressure Indonesia, Pak Harto can kick them out. He himself did not say that, but I can feel it."[42]

Elements of continuity in foreign policy

However, it is clear that as in the years of Suharto's New Order era, Habibie's government had not translated those voices into an official anti-American foreign policy. In fact, Habibie's foreign policy continued to express its desire to maintain good relationships with the West, especially the USA. For example, in an interview with the *Washington Post* in July 1998, Habibie expressed his desire to make a state visit to the USA. He said that "if I have the opportunity, the first country that I would like to visit is the US. This is to affirm how grateful we are." While maintaining that he had not been invited by the White House, Habibie hoped that President Clinton could help him to realise his "dream," namely, his desire "to thank President Clinton and the American people directly."[43] Of course, needless to say, the fact that Habibie's government continued to work closely with the IMF clearly indicated the importance of the West and its institutions for post-Suharto Indonesia.

Indonesia's response to international issues with identifiable Islamic dimensions also highlighted the limit of Habibie's government's ability to introduce a new course in foreign policy different from that of Suharto's. The case in point, for example, can be seen with regard to the fate of the D-8 the organisation of eight Islamic countries whose founding in 1997 was believed to have been supported strongly by Habibie as Vice-President. During his presidency, there were almost no references to the D-8 in Indonesia's diplomatic rhetoric. Moreover, there was no significant increase in Indonesia's activism in the OIC; an organisation in which many Islamic countries seek to define their identity in international politics.

Habibie's government also continued to avoid any co-religious solidarity factor in its foreign policy towards the Islamic world. When the USA bombed Afghanistan and Sudan in September 1998, for example, Indonesia's reaction was cautious. President Habibie stated that he could understand the attack. Foreign Minister Ali Alatas only expressed his "regret" at the attack. Such attitudes clearly upset a number of Muslim leaders. KISDI Chairman Ahmad Soemargono, for example, regretted "Habibie's soft attitude." Soemargono maintained that Habibie's government "should have condemned the US action. Habibie said that the attack was not related to Islam, and that was naive." Soemargono also suspected that Habibie's soft attitude grew out of "his fear that the US would no longer help [Indonesia]."[44] Similar criticism was also expressed by Rifyal Ka'bah, Chairman of the Islamic-based Moon and Star Party (*Partai Bulan Bintang*, PBB). Ka'bah maintained that he could understand Habibie's reaction because "our political leaders think that if we condemn the US, then the US will take revenge [against us]."[45]

A similar situation also prevailed when the USA launched an air strike against Iraq in mid-December 1998. Official reaction from the Indonesian government was less clear even compared to those of non-Islamic countries such as China and Russia. In a way not dissimilar with what was always the case during Suharto's years, the Indonesian government only expressed its "regret," urging the USA and the UK to stop the bombings. In what appears as an attempt to be "neutral," the Indonesian government also reiterated its "appeal to the government of Iraq to comply with all the clauses contained in the relevant UN resolutions and in the agreements reached with the UN secretary-general."[46] Such an attitude clearly indicates that the Indonesian government tried to portray its stance towards the issue as a neutral one.

The government's cautious reaction towards the US air strike was in contrast to the general reactions from the public, not only from some segments of the Muslim community, but also from the wider national elite. Various Islamic organisations, including Muhammadiyah, NU, and the newly created Islamic-based Justice Party, condemned the attack. Chairman of the NU, Abdurrahman Wahid, called the attack "deplorable and can not be tolerated at all."[47] The Justice Party's President, Nur Mahmudi Ismail, called the attack "Clinton's barbaric action." On 18 December, a number of students grouped under an organisation called Indonesian Muslim's Solidarity for Humanity staged a demonstration in front of the American Embassy condemning the strike, and urged the Indonesian government to sever diplomatic ties with the USA and Britain.[48]

In Ujung Pandang, South Sulawesi, a group of Muslim students under the name of Communication Forum for Makassar Muslim Student condemned Japan's support for the US strike and burned the Japanese flag at the consulate.[49] Marzuki Darusman, Chairman of Golkar, condemned the strike because "whatever the reason [behind the strike], no conflicts can be solved by force" and urged the Indonesian government to issue a strong reaction to

the USA.[50] The fact that the Indonesian government only expressed its "regret," rather than "condemnation," suggests that Habibie's foreign policy had not deviated from what used to be a customary practice of Suharto's diplomatic style which tended to avoid the intrusion of co-religious solidarity into the conduct of foreign policy.

The state of Indonesia's relations with Arab–Islamic countries also showed elements of continuity in Habibie's foreign policy. In general terms, Indonesia's relations with these countries had not shown significant improvements. In economic terms, however, there were in fact attempts to improve trade relations with countries in the region. It was acknowledged, for example, that there were efforts to expand export markets to the Middle East. According to Gusmardi Bustami,[51] Chairman of the National Trade Promotion Body (BPEN), while the government continued to maintain its traditional markets, it also sought to diversify the market to non-traditional ones. At this time, the target of market diversification was Africa and the Middle East. The Islamic factor was conspicuously absent when Bustami stated that the main reasons for the diversification were simply because these regions (a) had good potential, and (b) their import regulations are not as rigid as in Europe (for example, in the case of food stuff).[52] Again, this suggests that such an attempt was still based more on the pressing need of Habibie's government to boost exports in light of the current economic crisis rather than an expression of Islamic consideration into foreign policy.

The nature of state identity also served as a factor that dictated the necessity for continuity in foreign policy. It served as a constraint on the more tangible expression of Islam in foreign policy. During Suharto's New Order, it has been argued that the Islamic factor was constrained by the dilemma of dual identity faced by the state. That dilemma stems from the definition of the state identity which is not based on a particular religion while at the same time it does not repudiate the role of religion in the society altogether. This formulation, as discussed earlier, constitutes the essence of Indonesia's national identity as a *Pancasila* state which is neither theocratic nor secular. Habibie's foreign policy, and indeed the foreign policy of any government in Indonesia, should also be seen in the context of identity change or continuation. As long as the dilemma of dual identity continues to characterise the post-Suharto Indonesian state, the expression of the Islamic factor in foreign policy is bound to be weighed within it. Seen in that context, Habibie's foreign policy clearly indicated that national priorities and the regime's interests required the maintenance of close relations with the West rather than with Arab–Islamic countries. In other words, under the Habibie government, the Islamic factor also entered foreign policy only in form rather than substance.

Islam, political consolidation, and the rise of Abdurrahman Wahid

Islam, multiparty politics, and the defeat of "formal" political Islam

It was mentioned in Chapter 5 that the fall of Suharto opened up a new opportunity for Islam to once again come to the centre stage of national political life. Due to the ability of Islamic organisations such as Muhammadiyah and the NU to survive Suharto's New Order's policy of marginalising Islam from politics by shifting their focus to religious and social activities, the grass-root basis of these organisations remained strong. Moreover, Suharto never succeeded in curbing a sense of entitlement among the Muslim community to regain their rights to a formal political role and express their political aspirations. The process of Islamic revival, which became more evident in the later years of Suharto's rule, now began to be translated into a more visible political expression. Islam finally managed to create a public space within which its entitlement to play a formal political role can be fulfilled and its political aspirations expressed.

Indeed, soon after the resignation of President Suharto, political aspirations of Islamic groups became manifest in their strong desire to participate in practical politics through party politics. Out of forty-eight political parties eligible to compete in the June 1999 general elections, for example, many either adopted Islam as their ideological basis or relied on the Muslim community as the primary basis for electoral support. There were at least twelve political parties that officially declared Islam as their identity. Interestingly, a number of new political parties, especially those with large mass support, emanated from various groupings of the Islamic mass organisations discussed earlier. For some, the fact that these Islamic organisations and groupings provide a primary power base for the political parties indicates the revival of *politik aliran* (the politics of stream) in post-Suharto Indonesia.

From the NU, for example, emerged four political parties: *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* (PKB), *Partai Kebangkitan Ummat* (PKU), *Partai Nahdlatul Ummat* (PNU), and *Partai Solidaritas Uni Nasional Indonesia* (SUNI). However, only the PKB was established by and receives official support from the Central Executive Board of the NU. With full support from the charismatic leader of NU, Abdurrahman Wahid, the PKB constitutes the biggest political party among other NU-based political parties. Led by Matori Abdul Djalil, a protégé of Mr. Wahid, the PKB relied on strong support from traditional NU strongholds in East Java, Central Java, West Java, South Kalimantan, and South Sulawesi.[53]

The second largest Islamic organisation, Muhammadiyah, serves as the primary power base for PAN. In fact, this party is led by former Chairman of Muhammadiyah, Dr. Amien Rais, who left the position in order to take

up the party's leadership. Many prominent members of PAN's Central Executive Board are also prominent members of Muhammadiyah. This characteristic is not only noticeable at the national level, but also at provincial and district levels. Many leaders of Muhammadiyah at regional levels are also leaders of PAN. And, with the combination of the party's chairmanship, clear political platform, and mass-based support, PAN attracted substantial support from the middle and professional class in urban areas of Java, Sumatera (especially Aceh and West Sumatera), and Kalimantan.

PBB is one of the Islamic political parties that proclaims itself as the successor to the banned Masjumi party, the largest Islamic political party during the Sukarno era. Led by Professor Yusril Ihza Mahendra and some militant Islamic leaders such as Ahmad Soemargono, chairman of KISDI, PBB receives strong support from DDII, an Islamic organisation which claimed to have approximately 8 million members.[54] Unlike PKB and PAN, however, PBB explicitly adopts Islam as the ideological foundation (*azas*) of the party. Expecting to draw support from former members of the Masjumi party, this party attracts followers and sympathisers from several regions of Java, South Sumatera, and West Sumatera.

In addition to PBB and other Islamic-based political parties, there is still the United Development Party (PPP); one of three political parties allowed to exist under the New Order. Partly as an attempt to transform its image as an element of the New Order political structure, the PPP immediately returned to its identity as an Islamic political party after the collapse of Suharto and emerged as a major advocate for the return of Islam in politics. The PPP draws significant support from both modernist and traditionalist elements within the Islamic community. The chairman of the PPP, Hamzah Haz, and also several other key members in the party leadership, are members of NU. The PPP's strongholds are Jakarta, Sumatera (especially Aceh), and several areas in Java.

The main elements of new Islamic political thinking which evolved during Suharto's New Order also colour the orientation of these parties. The important one is the fact that none of these major political parties advocates the creation of an Islamic state as its primary objective. They, instead, endorse the idea of a nation-state based on the need to preserve Indonesia's nationalism. This is also the case with regard to other smaller Islamic political parties. The role of Islam in politics "is no longer defined solely in terms of the formalisation of Islam as party ideology, but more in terms of the extent to which Islamic values serve a source of inspiration in democratisation discourse."[55] Indeed, all Islamic-based political parties declare themselves as "open" political parties which uphold the commitment to serve the interests of not only the Muslim community but also those of the entire nation.

The two largest political parties with strong support from the Muslim community, PKB and PAN, do not officially use Islam as the *azas* (ideological principle) of their parties. Instead, they only recognise *Pancasila* as the ideological basis of the party in their respective party constitutions. Both parties

acknowledge that the recognition of pluralism is key to the development of a democratic Indonesia and the maintenance of the country's unity as a nation. However, it is important to note that despite PKB's claim as an "open" political party, it strongly preserves NU's identity. For example, the party's central leadership is occupied by members of NU. Meanwhile, PAN seeks to project its image as a truly plural political party by having on its central leadership board prominent figures with different religious and ideological backgrounds. This leads some critics to describe PAN as a "secular" political party, despite the fact that the primary support for this party comes from Muhammadiyah.

In fact, both PKB and PAN acknowledge religion (Islam in particular) as a source of inspiration and ideas. For them, religion provides values, norms, and principles that should guide and inform the practice of politics. The ideological and social construction of these two parties reflect a deep awareness of and commitment to the integration of religious and national interests, in which national elements are more evident than religious ones. For PAN and PKB, religious morality is expressed in terms of open political symbols that are acceptable to all groups in a plural society. The key word here is *inklusif* (all-inclusive). In this context, it has been noted that PKB and PAN are "more moderate and realistic in determining the place of ideology in a pluralistic nation-state"[56] such as Indonesia. In other words, as PKB and PAN rely on NU and Muhammadiyah voters respectively, it is also misleading to characterise both political parties as non-Islamic.

In this context, the distinction between what one analyst calls "formal" and "informal" Islamic political force might be a useful analytical tool for understanding Islam in contemporary Indonesian politics.[57] Those political parties that officially declare Islam as their political identity – such as PBB, PPP, and ten more smaller Islamic parties – can be grouped into the first category. Meanwhile, PKB and PAN represent "informal" Islamic parties that declare their identity as "open" political parties and adopt "pluralism" in their platform, but they remain dependent upon key segments in the Islamic community for support. In the broader context of Indonesian politics, which was also characterised by the prominence of secular-nationalist forces, the "formal" Islamic political parties are "in direct confrontation with the secular-nationalist force." Meanwhile, the "informal" Islamic political parties such as PKB and PAN have the potential to work with both "formal" Islamic parties on the one hand and secular-nationalist parties on the other.[58]

Such divisions among the Islamic political parties in particular, and within the Islamic community in general, clearly indicated that they would have to compete among themselves in winning support from the Islamic community. Moreover, given the fact that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim, then the significant portion of support to the secular-nationalist PDI-P might have come from within the Islamic community also. There was also a fourth political force, Golkar of the New Order, which also relied on support

from segments of the Islamic community despite the fact that its identity is closer to that of secular-nationalist. Within such a tight political competition, the general elections in June 1999 served as a significant political test for Islamic political parties, both in the "formal" and "informal" camps. While there were clear signs to suggest that Islam did emerge as an influential political force in post-Suharto Indonesia, the general elections in June 1999 would determine not only the characteristics of such a force but also the relationship between Islam and politics in the overall national political configuration.

After the elections, it became evident that "formal" Islamic political parties did not attract significant support from the Islamic community. Out of twelve Islamic-based political parties, only the PPP gained substantial votes of 10.7 per cent, secured 59 seats in the parliament, and managed to position itself as the third largest party among the big five. The other four political parties that gained significant votes were: the PDI-P which came first with 154 seats (33.7 per cent of votes), Golkar in the second position with 120 seats (22.4 per cent of votes), the PKB came fourth with 51 seats (12.6 per cent of votes), and PAN in the fifth position with 35 seats (7.1 per cent of votes). Meanwhile, another major "formal" Islamic party, PBB, only secured 13 seats and thinly escaped the compulsory "electoral threshold" of 2 per cent required if the party is to be qualified to contest again in the next general elections in 2004.

Such a result soon sparked a heated debate within the Islamic community on the position of Islam in post-Suharto politics. One common view maintained that the June 1999 general elections were a failure for political Islam.[59] It was clear that the number of seats secured by PDI-P in the parliament was far higher than all the seats secured by Islamic parties combined together. In that context, a leading Islamic thinker acknowledged that "political formalism, expressed in terms of political parties which officially use Islamic symbols, has never been prospective, even since 1955."[60] It has also been acknowledged that "officially, Islamic-based political parties are less popular than secular-based parties."[61] More specifically, it was also argued that "in terms of official political labelling, as a political force Islam was not attractive in Indonesia's political life."[62] In other words, Islamic political parties failed to pass the test of the June 1999 general elections and lost to the "secular" political parties. As claimed by a leading analyst, "the defeat of Islamic parties in Indonesia in 1999 general elections prolongs the list of the failure of political Islam in other countries as identified by Oliver Roy."[63]

The other view, however tried to put the issue in a more proportional context. It was argued that one should make a clear distinction between Islam as a political force within the society on the one hand and Islamic political parties on the other. In that context, it was argued that the June 1999 general elections presented a failure only for "formal" Islamic parties and not Islam itself.[64] Moreover, as the terminology of "political Islam" itself was *problematique*, dismissing PKB and PAN as simply "non-Islamic" or "secular" was

too simplistic and misleading. The fact that their main constituent and primary support base came from the two largest Islamic mass organisations – NU for PKB and Muhammadiyah for PAN – clearly suggests that these parties cannot be separated from Islamic constituents.[65] Indeed, as mentioned earlier, PKB and PAN represent "informal" Islamic political forces more attuned to the reality of complexity and pluralism in Indonesian politics, both within the Islamic community itself and within the broader Indonesian community.

Taken together with the fact that PDI-P and Golkar also gained significant votes in the general elections, it seems that "openness," "informality," and "substance" served as three significant qualities that influenced political preference of the majority of Indonesian voters. Islamic political thinker, Nurchalis Madjid, argued that "our nation has in fact experienced tremendous political progress . . . . Symbols are no longer important. People are now looking for substance."[66] Madjid's view was shared by another Muslim intellectual, Azra, when he argued that "Indonesia's Muslims do not emphasise religious formalism or symbolism . . . . Within the Indonesian context, do not expect that formal Islam can emerge as a powerful political force such as *Ikhwanul Muslimin* [Muslim Brotherhood] in Egypt."[67]

The importance of substance was also emphasised by Chairman of Muhammadiyah, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, when he warned that "in order to create a healthy democracy in Indonesia, it is time for leaders of the *ummah* to free themselves from the habit of playing with religious symbols if those symbols do not correspond with the substance of Islamic doctrine."[68] As "informal" Islamic parties, PAN and PKB were obviously equipped with the three qualities (i.e. openness, informality, and substance). Given their achievements in the 1999 general elections, one Islamic activist concludes that "qualitatively speaking, it can be said that Islamic politics has in fact become stronger in the present era of reform."[69] In other words, the defeat of Islamic parties in the 1999 general elections did not necessarily represent a defeat for Islam as a potent political force in post-Suharto Indonesian politics. Indeed, this view seemed to have been validated during the presidential election in October 1999.

Islam, political competition, and the election of Abdurrahman Wahid

Events surrounding the election of Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of NU and PKB, appeared to suggest that Islam did manage to find a new sense of collective awareness and act as a unified political force. Such a newly found awareness among Islamic leaders began with the defeat of Islamic parties in the June 1999 general elections. The fact that the secular-nationalist PDI-P led by Megawati came first in the elections strengthened the fear that Islam might once again be sidelined from national politics.[70] Such an uneasy feeling among Islamic political parties was augmented further by the growing

assertiveness of some PDI-P leaders and supporters in proclaiming their "victory" in the elections.

Faced with such an uncertain political prospect, several Islamic-based political parties with modernist orientation began to express the need to form a coalition among themselves in the run up to the presidential election in October 1999. The proposal gained substantial support from Amien Rais of PAN, who then played an instrumental role in forming a loose coalition under the name of Central Axis (*Poros Tengah*). Some saw that the prime motive of the Central Axis was to prevent Megawati from winning the presidential race. For example, there was a fear that Megawati's victory "would be a disaster for Islam" because she "will bring with her those who are phobia of Islam."[71] However, key leaders of the Central Axis, especially Amien Rais, argued that the main objective of the group was to seek a solution to the growing tension between two competing groups, one led by President Habibie and the other led by Megawati, in their race in the presidency.[72] In this context, Amien Rais proposed that the Central Axis should nominate Abdurrahman Wahid as the alternative presidential candidate. Amien strongly argued that Wahid was the only figure acceptable to almost all segments of Indonesian society, even though he at the same time also acknowledged that Wahid was "the best among the worst."[73]

Initially, Rais's proposal did not immediately receive direct support from his partners within the Central Axis camp. Despite Wahid's position as the leader of the largest Muslim organisation, many within the Central Axis camp were suspicious of Wahid's close relationship with Megawati. Several leaders of PBB, for example, were reluctant to embrace the idea.[74] As Amien's attempt to promote Wahid received only lukewarm support from his counterparts, there was also strong suspicion that the Central Axis would at the end throw its support behind Habibie. Moreover, the position of PKB itself was not clear and its leaders, including Wahid himself, continued to maintain that the party would form a coalition with PDI-P and back Megawati's candidacy. The initiative was suspected as an attempt by Amien to use Wahid as a "buffer" to block Megawati.[75]

To the general public, Amien's initiative was seen as an anomaly in Indonesian politics. The differences and a sense of rivalry between Amien and Wahid on many issues, which grew stronger during the campaign period, especially in the context of Muhammadiyah–NU relations (read: rivalry), led many to suggest that Amien was not serious and genuine. In other words, many argued that the idea did not make any sense and therefore should not be taken seriously.[76] Even Wahid's own acceptance of the nomination did not convince the sceptics. Despite lukewarm support from his supporters and cynical responses from his detractors, however, Rais relentlessly embarked upon a series of political lobbies and tried to convince the sceptics that his proposal was genuine and he was sincere and serious in nominating Wahid as the fourth president of Indonesia.[77]

Apart from the controversy over Wahid's nomination by Amien Rais, the Central Axis continued to accelerate its internal consolidation as a political caucus. It was estimated, for example, that the Central Axis would be able to secure 169 of 500 seats in the DPR if it managed to convince PKB to join provided the party could be convinced that Wahid would indeed be nominated as a candidate for president. This number of seats was comparable to either the strength of the coalition led by PDI-P camp (168) or that of Golkar/ Habibie (163).[78] Indeed, soon after the MPR session was convened on 1 October 1999, the Central Axis began to demonstrate its strength as a power to be reckoned with. Such strength was evident when a number of PDI-P's proposals on a number of issues – such as agenda, presidential election mechanism, and number of factions in the MPR – was rejected by MPR. The most significant initial victory for the Central Axis came when its candidate for the position of the chairman of MPR, Amien Rais, defeated Matori Abdul Djalil, Chairman of PKB who was nominated by PDI-P. When the position of the speaker of the house also went to Akbar Tanjung, Chairman of Golkar, a serious sense of defeat for the PDI-P began to creep in.

Despite such initial achievements, the outcome of the presidential election remained highly unpredictable. It was still not clear, for example, whether the Central Axis would finally embrace Amien's proposal to nominate Abdurrahman Wahid, also known as Gus Dur. Moreover, there was also speculation that Wahid himself might withdraw his candidacy shortly before the voting began in order to pave the way for Megawati's election.[79] Doubts over Wahid's true intention behind his acceptance of Amien's nomination remained strong. However, it was only after the MPR finally rejected Habibie's accountability speech, forcing him to withdraw from the race, that the PPP and PBB finally joined the Reform Faction (*Fraksi Reformasi*)[80] to nominate Abdurrahman Wahid as their candidate. Moreover, Wahid was in fact determined and serious in accepting Amien's nomination and promised that he would not withdraw from the competition. Amien's initiative to bring Wahid to presidency finally paid off. At the presidential election on 20 October 1999, Wahid finally defeated Megawati in a very tight race. The next day, however, Megawati was elected as Vice-President.

The election of Wahid reflected a significant development in Indonesian politics in the post-Suharto era, namely the emergence of a new power centre comprised of several Islamic-based parties with a modernist orientation: the Central Axis. The election of Wahid as president cannot be separated from the active role of this group. As mentioned earlier, it was the leader of the Central Axis, Amien Rais, who took the initiative to nominate Gus Dur as president. More importantly, the emergence of this group as a significant political player demonstrates the growing political role of the modernist Muslim in Indonesia. After more than three decades of being sidelined by Suharto, this group managed to reclaim its rightful place in Indonesian politics. Indeed, under the dynamic leadership of Amien Rais, the Central

Axis succeeded in establishing itself as a powerful political player in post-Suharto Indonesia. At the same time it demonstrated the ability of Islam to present itself as a potent political force.

Islam, however, is not the only political force in post-Suharto Indonesian politics. The interests of secular-nationalist groups also serve as an important context for policy-making in the post-Suharto era. Despite the fact that Islam has now become part of the state, and that the distinction between Islam and the government has become less relevant than during the Suharto era, tensions within the state on the one hand – internal tensions within and among political groupings – and between the state and the society on the other continue to influence the dynamics of Indonesian domestic politics under Wahid's presidency. Consequently, policy-making will be dictated also by the imperative of political compromise. In other words, tensions and the imperative for compromise will serve as an important domestic context for policy-making, including in foreign policy. They serve both as constraints and opportunities to Indonesian foreign policy under the Wahid government. In such a new domestic political context, how then has the Islamic factor entered foreign policy?

Foreign policy of Abdurrahman Wahid: the tenacity of the dual identity dilemma

The basic declaratory objectives of Indonesian foreign policy under the Wahid government did not show a sharp departure from its predecessors. First, the new government continued to emphasise the basic objectives of upholding Indonesia's territorial integrity. Second, President Wahid strongly pledged to restore Indonesia's dignity as a sovereign state and regain the country's position as a respected member of the international community. In his inaugural speech, Wahid clearly stated that his government "would do its best to safeguard national unity, uphold the country's territorial integrity and preserve Indonesia's dignity in a world marked by a fierce competition among nations. Such an agenda would be pursued in accordance with the principle of mutual respect in inter-state relations."[81] Third, the Wahid government also made it clear that the conduct of foreign policy and all diplomatic efforts would be directed to serve the government's priority of restoring international confidence and accelerating the economic recovery.[82] In that context, Minister of Foreign Affairs Alwi Shihab expressed his wish to see the foreign ministry (DEPLU) play a role as a "marketing centre" in the government's drive to restore confidence and overcome the economic crisis.[83]

The basic principles by which such foreign policy objectives would be achieved closely resembled the foreign policies of his three predecessors. President Wahid, for example, expressed his intention to promote Indonesia as "a country that can be a friend of all nations." In the language of Minister Shihab, "one enemy is too many, and a thousand friends are too few."[84]

Wahid's government did not want Indonesia to be seen as a country associated only with a particular country or group of countries; it therefore needed to develop "balance" and "equidistant" relations with all nations. Both "the policy of equidistance" and "balance relationship" reflected Wahid's intention to register the spirit of non-alignment into Indonesia's foreign policy, albeit in a slightly different rhetorical form. It also reflected the strongly held principle of *bebas-aktif* (independent and active) in foreign policy.

Wahid's foreign policy agendas indeed reflected concerns of the new government over pressing domestic issues. First, the priority over the maintenance of territorial integrity of the state clearly reflected the domestic political reality of Indonesia marked by growing potential for territorial disintegration. Growing resentments against the central government in several provinces posed a serious threat to national unity. When some provinces expressed such aspirations in the form of demands for independence, the future of Indonesia as a state was clearly at stake. Such demands for independence had been strongly expressed in the province of Aceh where a serious armed secessionist movement was matched by popular support for referendum. To a lesser degree, similar demands for independence had also been expressed in Irian Jaya (now Papua) and Riau provinces. Put in the context of East Timor's independence, the question of Indonesia's territorial integrity could no longer be taken for granted.

Second, the emphasis on the need to restore Indonesia's dignity as a sovereign state was very much linked to the recent historical context when Wahid took over power. When Wahid assumed the presidency, Indonesia was facing a serious challenge in preserving its status and identity either as a respected member of the international community or as a sovereign state. The economic crisis, and its attendant political turmoil, undermined Indonesia's image and pride within the international community. Then, there was a degree of frustration and resentment within the society when the country had to rely on the guidance of the IMF and the World Bank on economic issues. When international pressure was imposed upon Indonesia in the case of East Timor, especially in the form of Australian-led humanitarian intervention, many felt that Indonesia's sovereignty had been compromised. In that context, many Indonesians resented the fact that their country has become so helpless in the face of international pressure and intervention. At a time when national pride was seriously hurt, it is only logical that the new government was obliged to reinvigorate a new sense of dignity as the basis of legitimacy.

Third, the rationale behind Wahid's intention to make the economic recovery as one of his foreign policy objectives was self-evident. When Wahid assumed the presidency, his government inherited a frail economy whose recovery would be determined by the return of international confidence and the flow of international assistance. In that context, Wahid realised that the legitimacy of his government depends on the ability to accelerate the economic recovery process. Indeed, Wahid must have clearly understood that Suharto's

failure in solving the crisis contributed to his downfall. Wahid had to face the hard reality that economic recovery can only be accelerated by the return of international confidence and the flow of international assistance. Both requirements to a considerable degree depended on the ability of the new government to display its credibility in undertaking necessary domestic political and economic reforms. And, foreign policy served as a vehicle by which the government's commitment and credibility could be demonstrated abroad and international assistance secured.

The three main agendas in Wahid's foreign policy mentioned above, except for the need to maintain territorial integrity, did not differ significantly from those of Suharto's when the former president took over power from Sukarno in 1966. When Suharto took over power, the Indonesian economy was on the brink of collapse and the country's international image was severely undermined due to Sukarno's confrontational foreign policy. Suharto also put high priority on the restoration of international confidence, the rehabilitation of Indonesia's image and dignity, and the search for international assistance as prerequisites for economic recovery at home. In principle, Suharto also embarked upon a policy of non-alignment that emphasised the need to uphold the country's independence in a world marked by superpowers' competition for influence. Indeed, by invoking the principle of *bebas-aktif*, Suharto rallied around the theme of "making friends with all nations" and "balance" in conducting foreign policy. Seen in such historical context, the themes of "policy of equidistance" and "balance" in Wahid's foreign policy also registered similar spirit. Wahid's government also continued to justify its foreign policy initiative in terms of the *bebas-aktif* principle.

Elements of continuity became even more evident when Wahid, like Suharto, had to rely on the flow of international assistance to ensure the success of economic recovery at home. This demonstrates two important features of Indonesian foreign policy under Suharto, Habibie, and Wahid. First, Indonesian foreign policy under President Wahid continued to be dictated by the imperative of domestic concerns and interests. The emphasis on economic recovery illustrates this. Second, the Wahid government also found itself in a similar situation to Suharto's in the mid-1960s, where domestic economic weaknesses could only be overcome with the support and assistance of the international community. In this context, Minister Alwi Shihab admitted that Indonesia was not yet able to abandon the strategy of "using foreign resources to solve domestic problems."[85]

Despite such evident continuity in its agendas, principle, and functions, Wahid's foreign policy differed significantly from his predecessors' in terms of its manifestation. Indeed, it has been acknowledged within the foreign ministry that "President Gus Dur apparently tries to shift away from our traditional foreign policy attitude."[86] Such a shift from the traditional attitude was clearly demonstrated by the extent to which Wahid was prepared to achieve his foreign policy objectives. As mentioned earlier, Wahid's

government seemed determined to make "the policy of equidistance" and "balancing" two key elements in the conduct of foreign policy. And, it is on this aspect that the foreign policy of the Wahid government differed from those of earlier governments.

First, the manifestation of his desire to be "everybody's friend" differed significantly from his three predecessors. Much to the consternation of many within the Islamic community, Wahid suggested that his government intended to open official contact with Israel, albeit in the form of direct trade ties. President Wahid maintained that relations with Israel were important because "Indonesia can learn a lot from Israel on economy and democracy."[87] Wahid's plan was supported strongly by his Foreign Minister Alwi Shihab who argued that trade ties with Israel would serve as an effective way to attract foreign investment in the country's economic recovery drive.[88] He also argued that "Indonesia could use its ties with Israel to lobby American investors."[89] By proposing such a controversial plan, especially a few days after his election, Wahid was clearly prepared to take on a sensitive issue that no Indonesian president had dared to touch before.[90]

Second, the aspiration to pursue an independent course of action has always been a popular theme in Indonesian foreign policy. The spirit of non-alignment dictates any Indonesian government to occasionally invoke this theme. However, there were differences in the foreign policies of Sukarno and Suharto regarding how this aspiration was actually expressed.[91] How President Wahid intends to implement his "balance" foreign policy or "the policy of equidistance" is no exception. A few days after the inaugural speech, President Wahid declared that his government would embark upon an "Asia First" policy. He declared that Indonesia intended to work more closely with other Asian major powers, especially the People's Republic of China (PRC) and India. He then called for the establishment of a coalition of Asian major powers; an idea that has been called "Asia's Central Axis" by some observers.[92] Wahid maintained that such a coalition is necessary, not only for maintaining peace and stability in the region but also for building a just international political order.[93]

The idea was originally expressed by Wahid when he met with a visiting delegation of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Jakarta in October 1999, shortly before he was elected as president. In the meeting, Wahid reportedly stated that there was a need to revive a "non-aligned coalition" between Indonesia, China, and India in order to "counter American hegemonism." He also contended that such a coalition would greatly help the attempt to correct the "imbalance" in international relations that favours the West.[94] The idea soon found its official manifestation when Wahid became president. When he announced that his first official state visits would be to China and India, many took it as a clear sign that the new president was indeed prepared "to do more to counterbalance Western influence."[95] Whether intended or not, a similar effect may have been created

when Wahid conveyed this planned trip to American Ambassador Robert Gelbard in a meeting that took place soon after his inauguration.[96]

In a press conference during his first official state visit to China on 1–3 December 1999, President Wahid again reiterated the idea, but this time he included Japan and Singapore. Wahid argued that close cooperation among the five countries would strengthen the position of Asia in the world. Wahid also maintained that if the five countries united and worked together, and the resources of Indonesia, China, and India were combined with the capital, technology, and managerial expertise of Japan and Singapore, then "we can face other countries in the world with eye to eye."[97] Aware that the tone of such a proposal could be interpreted as an attempt to build an anti-West coalition, President Wahid denied that his view reflected "a new form of *konfrontasi* (confrontation)."[98] In an apparent attempt to dissociate himself from former President Sukarno's aggressive foreign policy, he assured that "we have no intention to undermine our relations with other countries."[99] Wahid argued that the proposed coalition was only meant to strengthen cooperation among Asian countries, void of any intention "to replace the role of other countries."[100]

Third, the policy of equidistance was also expressed in Wahid's intention to pay more attention to the Middle East and improve Indonesian relations with regional countries. The appointment of Alwi Shihab, a close friend of Wahid himself, as the Republic's Foreign Minister was closely related to Wahid's intention to develop better relations with Middle Eastern countries. Minister Shihab revealed that Wahid offered the position of Foreign Minister to him because the President saw that "Alwi has good contacts with Middle East, [a region] that has not yet been touched [by former governments]."[101] In other words, Wahid believed that Indonesia should pay more attention to Middle Eastern countries because "they have the potentials to help Indonesia."[102] As revealed by Minister of Finance Bambang Sudibyo, President Wahid wanted "to explore the possibilities of making Middle East as a source of foreign borrowing" so that Indonesia "will not depend on one group [of countries] only."[103]

Within such formulation of "policy of equidistance" and "balancing act" in Wahid's foreign policy, the Islamic factor was conspicuously absent. There had been no official reference to the Islamic factor, either in policy pronouncements or in the actual agenda, of Wahid's foreign policy. Islam was not quoted as a primary driving force behind Wahid's intention to develop closer relationships with Middle Eastern countries. Policy pronouncements by the Wahid government on this plan, either by the President himself or his Foreign Minister, were always framed in terms of Indonesian domestic economic interests. The place of the Islamic factor had even become overshadowed when President Wahid and Foreign Minister Shihab insisted on opening direct trade ties with Israel. Rather than attempting to build stronger co-religious solidarity with Arab countries in opposing Israel's policy in the Middle East,

President Wahid was more enthusiastic in talking about the need to form an Asian-based coalition to counter the excessive influence of the West.

If Islam was absent in the foreign policy agenda, can the same be said in terms of the actual conduct of foreign policy? This question is explored in the following discussion. It argues that, as it did during the Suharto era, under President Wahid Islam also entered foreign policy more in form rather than in substance. When Islam entered foreign policy calculations, it was more in terms of domestic political interests of the regime rather than for the sake of *ummah* in general. In other words, the place of the Islamic factor in Wahid's foreign policy did not differ significantly from that of Suharto's. In that context, as observed with a degree of trepidation by a Muslim activist, "Indonesia's foreign policy [under President Wahid] will not undergo significant change. It will continue to be secular."[104] Indeed, the conspicuous absence of official Islamic expression in Indonesian foreign policy remained a constant element in the relationship between Islam and foreign policy in Indonesia.

Conduct of foreign policy: form, substance, and the primacy of domestic interests

It has been mentioned earlier that Indonesian foreign policy under President Wahid, like under previous governments before him, continued to be dictated by the primacy of domestic interests. Faced with enormous political and economic problems at home, President Wahid's immediate priority was to find a way out of the crisis-ridden situation that he inherited from Suharto and Habibie. Like them, President Wahid was also presented with a hard reality that sustainable and meaningful economic recovery could not be achieved without substantial external assistance. The task became even more gigantic when the influx of international support required the return of international confidence. Within such circumstances, the attempt to restore international confidence and the search for external sources of assistance constituted two immediate priorities in the conduct of Wahid's foreign policy.

At the same time, domestic political crisis required Wahid's government to invoke a sense of domestic confidence through a display of independence in dealing with the outside world. While his advent to power had been based on a strong legitimacy resulting from a democratic election, that legitimacy alone would not be sufficient without the ability to display a sense of purpose and direction in handling the pressing economic and political problems facing the country. It has been argued earlier that in order to strengthen domestic confidence, the new government was obliged to display strong commitment to restore the nation's dignity and state sovereignty. And, such domestic political requirements set the limit for the fulfilment of internal economic interests through the use of external resources. In other words, foreign policy choices were once again limited by the imperative of domestic political interests.

The conduct of Wahid's foreign policy from October 1999 demonstrated the point clearly. Wahid's proposal on an Asian coalition among Indonesia, India, and China, which might also include Japan and Singapore, certainly registered a degree of Indonesia's dissatisfaction with the dominant role of the West in international relations. As mentioned earlier, many in Indonesian elite circles felt betrayed by the West, especially Australia, in the East Timor affairs. There was a feeling that instead of supporting Indonesia to hold the country together, the West had taken advantage of Indonesia's troubled situation to separate East Timor from the Republic. Even prior to the East Timor debacle, there was also a sense of frustration among the political elite over Indonesia's "over-dependence" on the West, especially on the USA.[105] In this context, the "Asia coalition" proposal was seen as an attempt to "balance American and Western influence" and "limit the scope for external forces to undermine Indonesia's sovereignty."[106] In other words, the move corresponded with a domestic requirement that necessitated the government demonstrate a strong desire to exercise a degree of independence in dealing with the outside world.

However, it was not immediately clear how the Indonesian government was going to achieve such a high-profile proposal. It was not clear either how far Indonesia was really prepared to translate the idea into reality. First, it has been pointed out that the coalition would be constrained by "cultural and ideological obstacles" because of the need "to reconcile communism in China, Hinduism in India, and Islam in Indonesia."[107] Second, as the initiator of the idea, Indonesia was in the weakest position compared to India and China in terms of its political, economic, and military capability. In such circumstances, the ability of Indonesia to translate the idea into reality was highly questionable.[108] Finally, the idea became even more problematic if it was put in the context of troubled bilateral relations between India and China on the one hand and the volatile nature of Indonesia–China relations on the other.[109] Moreover, Japan and Singapore did not express any interest in the idea. In that context, it has been pointed out that Wahid's proposal constituted a "concept" rather than a "structure."[110] Indeed, the intention "to make Asia as Indonesia's primary economic and political partner to reduce dependency on the West"[111] appeared to represent a "form" rather than "substance."

If the "Asia coalition proposal" constituted the declaratory form of foreign policy, then its substance remained the reality of dependence on the USA and the West. Indonesia's economic recovery, for example, was still very much under the guidance of the IMF and the World Bank. In order to cover the deficit in the 2000 state budget (estimated –5 per cent of GDP or approximately Rp. 45 trillion), Indonesia continued to rely on foreign borrowing. For example, it expected to receive around US$4.1 billion in new foreign loans from the Consultative Group on Indonesia (CGI)[112], and also from the IMF. This amounted to approximately Rp. 29 trillion or 75 per cent of total budget deficit. Moreover, Indonesia's external debt in the second quarter of 1999

was estimated at around US$142.4 billion. It was also a fact that a large portion of it came from Western sources.[113] Indeed, substantial efforts were devoted to secure such financial support from the West and its financial institutions. Acknowledgement of the paramount significance of the American role in the Indonesian economy was also evident when Minister Shihab, in the context of justifying his plan to establish direct trade ties with Israel, stated that "we are opening trade ties with Israel, but our final aim is really the American investors."[114]

Indonesia's dependence on the IMF was clearly demonstrated in late May 2000 when the IMF postponed the disbursement of a US$400 million loan. The failure of Wahid's government to make concrete progress in implementing the IMF programme it agreed to in January 2000 was cited as the main reason for the delay. The government immediately called for an emergency cabinet meeting and admited that it had fallen behind on forty-two items.[115] On that occasion, several ministers repeatedly stated that the government was still committed to implement the IMF-guided economic reforms. President Wahid even bent to IMF's demand that Indonesia should take concrete actions in implementing a set of key reforms and brought forward the deadline from 12 April to 8 April.[116] The episode clearly demonstrates that Indonesia did not really have any choice but to comply. Indeed, as the IMF's representative in Jakarta put it, "without an IMF programme, a lot of sources of funds dry up."[117]

There might be some truth in the suggestion that the "Asia Coalition" proposal – despite the fact that it is still a construct – could function as a bargaining chip for Indonesia in dealing with the USA and the West. However, if such a need for a bargaining chip did exist, then it precisely suggested the importance of relations with the West for Indonesia. If Wahid's Indonesia did not attach paramount significance to its relations with the USA and the West, such a need would not have arisen. Therefore, the argument clearly strengthened the view that while the "Asia coalition" proposal serves as a "form" of foreign policy, the search for support from the West became the "substance."

Besides presenting a convenient way out of the dilemma of dependence, the conduct of Wahid's foreign policy had also served the functions of advancing internal interests of both the state and the regime. First, the need to restore national pride, through a necessary display of a measured independence from the West, was served nicely by the politics of balance. The balancing act, expressed in the call for the creation of an Asia coalition, was warmly welcomed with a degree of pride at home. Many saw the initiative as an attempt by Wahid to restore Indonesia's dignity and national pride. For example, a leading ICMI activist, Nasir Tamara, expressed his support of what he saw as Wahid's "attempt to restore Indonesia's status and respectful place in the front row of world's major powers."[118] Wahid was also praised for his initiative to restore Indonesia's national pride by moving closer to Asian countries.[119] The

move was seen as "original and brilliant."[120] It was also suggested that "Gus Dur's diplomatic manoeuvres should be followed up at implementation level."[121] More importantly, the Chairman of MPR and leader of the Central Axis Amien Rais also welcomed Wahid's intention to move closer to Asia.[122] It is, therefore, very clear that Wahid's initiative conveyed an important symbolic meaning on Indonesia's independence vis-à-vis the West.

Second, the newly found enthusiasm in forging closer relations with China in particular also served the need to increase both domestic and international confidence in the Wahid government, especially among the Indonesian Chinese and the Chinese business community elsewhere. Wahid understood very well that a speedy economic recovery could be achieved if the Indonesian Chinese brought back their money and started doing business again in the country. He also understood that the overseas Chinese business community also had an important role to play in that process. In his attempt to restore their confidence, President Wahid initiated a series of policies to dismantle discriminatory regulations imposed by the New Order against them. Such a changed attitude on the domestic front should be matched by the same attitude towards mainland China. It was widely believed that President Wahid saw that support from domestic Chinese would soon come forward if Indonesia had better relations with Beijing. This assumption of the linkage between Indonesian Chinese and Beijing might be unfounded, but the gesture did send a powerful message, both to Indonesian Chinese at home and abroad, that he and his government had nothing against the Chinese. During his official state visit to Beijing, Wahid even went to the extent of claiming himself to be of Chinese descent. The joint communiqué issued at the end of the visit states that Indonesia–China relations should no longer be coloured by racial and ideological sentiments.[123]

Third, pressing domestic interests of preserving Indonesia's territorial integrity was partly served during Wahid's visits to the neighbouring ASEAN and Middle Eastern countries in November. During the visits, the Wahid government managed to secure substantial international support for Indonesia's territorial integrity. More specifically, the host governments also assured Wahid that the secessionist movement in the province of Aceh would not receive their support. The Philippine Foreign Minister Domingo Siazon, for example, warned of the possible spread of what he called "the Acehnese disease" to the region. Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan was also worried that the revival of secessionist movements in Indonesia might bring the country to the situation similar to that in Yugoslavia.[124] Malaysia, which was suspectedof being sympathetic to the cause of Aceh's independence, also expressed its support to the Indonesian government in holding the country together. Malaysia also firmly stated that it did not and will not support the Acehnese Freedom Movement (GAM).

A more concrete result came during the informal summit in late November 1999 in Manila, when ASEAN leaders expressed their support to Indonesia

by stating that Aceh is an integral part of and should not secede from the Republic of Indonesia. Similar support and assurances also came from a number of Middle Eastern countries. Kuwait and Qatar, for example, expressed their wish that Aceh should remain part of Indonesia. According to Minister Shihab, the government of Qatar even promised that, as the host for the upcoming Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting, it would sponsor a recommendation supporting Indonesia's territorial integrity and that Aceh should remain an integral part of Indonesia.[125] By securing such support from Kuwait and Qatar, it appeared that the Wahid government intended to send a strong message to Acehnese rebels that their pursuit of independence would not receive any support from Islamic countries.[126]

Four, the use of foreign policy for the domestic political interests of the regime, especially to strengthen the regime's position in the domestic political context, can also be identified. When Wahid was on a series of visits to European countries in early February 2000, the independent Committee for the Inquiry of Human Rights Violations (KPP-HAM) in East Timor concluded that the former Commander of the Armed Forces General Wiranto was responsible for what happened in the territory after the referendum. Wahid immediately reacted by stating that General Wiranto should resign from his post as Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs. When Wiranto refused to resign – citing that he had not been asked to directly by the President – speculation grew that the military might launch a coup. Wahid, however, did not back down and even repeated his call for Wiranto to resign when he was still abroad. Wahid's position vis-à-vis General Wiranto grew stronger when several leaders of the countries he was visiting issued their support to Wahid and even warned about the consequences of a military coup. When Wahid finally dismissed Wiranto upon his return to Indonesia, the general's position was too discredited for him to resist the President's decision. This episode clearly suggests how foreign policy had been skilfully used by Wahid in order to gain international support for his government and at the same time strengthened his political position in the internal power struggle.

Finally, and more importantly, all diplomatic efforts carried out so far had been explained in terms of Indonesia's internal interests to accelerate the process of economic recovery. In that context, it is evident that the Islamic factor had not served as a primary consideration in the conduct of Wahid's foreign policy. During his visits to the Middle East, for example, the government made it clear that the primary objective of these visits was to attract investments from Arab countries and promote economic cooperation between Indonesia and the regional countries.[127] At the end of his visit to Kuwait, President Wahid himself disclosed that "the Kuwaiti government as well as its private business circle have pledged a huge gradual investment in Indonesia."[128] He also appealed to the Indonesian business community to explore and take advantage of the markets of Qatar and Kuwait.[129] During

the visits, there was no mention of, for example, the need to build an Islamic solidarity in dealing with Israel. Nor were the visits framed in terms of the need to work towards co-religious agenda. In fact, the visit left a strong impression that Wahid was attempting to alleviate the concerns of Arab countries over his plan to open direct trade ties with Israel. Such an impression became even stronger when, during his meeting with the leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Yasser Arafat, President Wahid assured him that "no matter how close I am to Israel, I will never sacrifice Palestinians."[130]

It is also interesting to note that the fact that Wahid was visiting Arab–Islamic countries did not deter domestic criticisms of Wahid's frequent travel abroad. When the plan for the trip to the Middle East was announced, it immediately invited strong reactions from members of DPR. House of Representative Speaker Akbar Tanjung, for example, questioned the government's sense of urgency. He stated that "without taking away the importance of foreign affairs, the government should recognize that domestic issues are no less important and are in fact more crucial. . . . The bottom line is that domestic priorities must be put ahead of foreign issues."[131] Hajrianto Tohari, a former leader of Muhammadiyah Youth, also criticised the trip and asked Wahid to focus more on domestic affairs.[132] Yasril Ananta, Chairman of DPR Foreign Relations Committee, also voiced a similar complaint and asked the Foreign Minister to advise Wahid to postpone foreign trips.[133] Indeed, the fact that the criticism was launched when Wahid was visiting Arab–Islamic countries clearly suggests the absence of the Islamic factor in Indonesian foreign policy and, on the contrary, demonstrates the primacy of domestic interests.

The secondary importance of the Islamic factor in Indonesian foreign relations was also evident when the utility of Wahid's trip to the Middle East was also questioned by some within the Islamic community itself. Bachrawi Sanusi of NU, for example, argued that "before domestic political stability is achieved, it is useless to expect that those oil-rich countries will invest in Indonesia."[134] According to Sanusi, Middle East investment in Indonesia accounted only for 0.05 per cent of total foreign investment in the country. Sudrajat, Head of Middle East and OIC Section of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, also expressed his pessimism when he stated that "do not expect that there would be an inflow of fund from Middle East after President Wahid's visits."[135] He also argued that Indonesia's relations with Middle Eastern countries have always been good, but that did not affect Indonesia's trade with them. A similar view was also expressed by Umar Juoro, an economist affiliated with ICMI, in terms of foreign borrowing. He stated that "the first is IMF. The Middle East can be a supplement to that."[136] Indeed, according to the Islamic daily *Republika*, "in order to get 'big fish' from the visits to those oil-rich countries, we need hard work because the [Islamic] brotherhood [factor] alone is not sufficient."[137]

As demonstrated in the above analysis, Indonesian foreign policy once again found itself in a familiar dilemma of dependence. On the one hand, domestic

weaknesses continued to sustain the country's dependence on external sources of assistance, especially from the West and its financial institutions. On the other hand, continued dependence on the West in particular and the outside world in general would potentially undermine domestic political interests of the regime. In solving such contradictions between domestic political requirements and the pressing need for external assistance, Wahid's foreign policy choices were limited indeed. It once again reinforced the necessity to differentiate "form" from "substance" in foreign policy. As with Suharto before him, Wahid was obliged to embark upon a set of declaratory policies that could not be operationalised, while at the same time pursuing operational policies that could not be declared. And, the declaratory "policy of equi-distance" and "balancing act" seemed to fulfil such a function adequately. It served domestic interests of both the state and the regime.

Within such a dilemma, the Islamic factor continued to be secondary in Wahid's foreign policy. The declaratory intent to improve relations with Middle East countries was manifest more in terms of domestic political and political interests rather than the pursuit of religious agenda in foreign policy. However, this does not mean that Islam did not enter foreign policy at all. As demonstrated in the following section, Islam continues to enter foreign policy more as a constraint, that is as a factor that limits foreign policy choices of the government so that it will not harm the interests and aspiration of the Muslim community. Indeed, the influence of Islam as a form of "social control mechanism" in the conduct of foreign policy has increasingly become more significant in the post-Suharto era. Nowhere else has this feature in the relationship between Islam and foreign policy been more evident than in the case of the Wahid government's plan to open direct trade ties with Israel. However, as the following discussion will demonstrate, the case of Israel at the same time also shows that the scope of Islamic concerns and agendas in foreign policy have not changed significantly from that of the previous periods.

Controversy over Israel ties and the nature of Islamic influence in foreign policy

The way by which the Islamic factor has entered foreign policy under the Wahid government can be seen in the case of the government's delayed plan to open direct trade ties with Israel. As mentioned earlier, the fact that Wahid announced the plan immediately after he was elected president clearly suggested that the opening of trade ties with Israel constituted a priority in Indonesian foreign policy. After his appointment, Foreign Minister Alwi Shihab soon declared that "[Indonesia] is going to open direct trade ties with Israel without compromising our principles, namely supporting Palestine until it becomes an independent and sovereign state."[138] Alwi maintained that the plan was a key to the country's economic recovery process. He also argued that "in handling the prolonged economic crisis, we need foreign investment

and capital to rebuild our economy . . . We know that most of the world's capital is owned by Jewish people." Therefore, Shihab concluded that "it is impossible for Indonesia to remain closed to Israel forever. Israel will simply shut the gate on us."[139] Shihab's argument was also supported by some members of the business community.

The reasons advanced by the government to justify its plan to open ties with Israel were not confined to the economic recovery alone. There were at least five more reasons why the Wahid government believed that such ties were significant for Indonesia. In this context, it is also interesting to note that the government had put forward a wide range of reasons; from substantial to the naive ones. Indeed, a closer look at those reasons reveals that President Wahid and Minister Shihab were quite determined in their attempt to establish official contacts between Jakarta and Tel Aviv.

First, Minister Shihab argued that direct ties with Israel would provide an opportunity for Indonesia to play a role in seeking peaceful solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. More specifically, Wahid and Shihab believed that by establishing direct trade relations with Israel, Indonesia would be in a better position to lobby the Jewish state concerning its negotiation with the PLO.[140] In this context, Shihab maintained that "we open ourselves [to Israel] in the interests of our Palestinian brothers, so that we perhaps can be a mediator. We can talk to Israel so that it will take into account Palestinian interests."[141] President Wahid, in his meeting with Yasser Arafat, also told the Palestinian leader that "we want to open direct trade ties with Israel in order to support the PLO's position." According to Wahid, "President Arafat expressed his understanding on this view."[142]

Second, it was also argued that the opening of direct trade ties with Israel would make it possible for Indonesia to use the Jewish lobby in order to attract Jewish and foreign investors to invest in Indonesia. Minister Shihab, for example, maintained that "do not look at Israel as a small country. Because, the Israeli lobby is strong. It is strong enough to facilitate Western investors to come to Indonesia."[143] He also stated that "like it or not, Indonesia must eventually deal with Wall Street corporations, which were predominantly Jewish." Therefore, Alwi maintained that "I want to use our trade relations ties [sic!] with Israel to attract the Jewish business network to invest in Indonesia."[144]

Third, the plan was also justified in terms of religious arguments. Minister Shihab admitted that he could not understand why the plan was opposed. He maintained that "the Prophet [Muhammad] himself had trade contacts with Jewish people, even though they at that time were launching a political conspiracy against him."[145] A more religious argument was given by Shihab when he maintained that the plan was based on the logic of Islamic *fiqh*:[146] *dar'ul mafasid muqaddamun 'ala jalbil mashalih* (preventing damage takes priority over obtaining benefits). According to Shihab, Indonesia "is now in the position of *dar'ul mafasid* (preventing damage), and not *jalbil mashalih*

(obtaining benefits). Our worsening economy is perhaps a *mafasid* situation (damaging) . . . therefore we have to undertake *dar'un* (to prevent it) by, among others, lobbying without sacrificing our country."[147] President Wahid, in his defence of the plan, was less benign than the Foreign Minister when he stated that "it is strange that we [Indonesia] established diplomatic relations with [former] Soviet and China, [even though] in their constitutions both of them clearly oppose God. Meanwhile, Israel has never opposed God, so why should we make such a fuss about them. We must be more mature!"[148]

Fourth, Foreign Minister Shihab also argued that the outreach to Israel could be used to help some generals avoid an international tribunal. Shihab maintained that by taking advantage of the Jewish lobby, Indonesia could avoid the attempt by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR) led by Mary Robinson to bring a number of generals accused of violating human rights in East Timor to the International Tribunal for War Crime. He expected that the Jewish lobby, which has close relations with Robinson, could help Indonesia to avoid being put within the same category with Rwanda. He maintained that "we know there are forces that can prevent that. One such a force is the Jewish lobby."[149]

Finally, Minister Shihab argued that opening direct trade ties with Israel might also help prevent the economic crisis from occurring again. He argued that "if it was true that George Soros played a role in instigating the crisis in our economy, with the existence of direct trade relations, we can talk to him; 'look, we have relations. So, if you want to create trouble (*utak-utik*), please do it somewhere else, not to our country.'"[150] When this kind of justification was expressed on more than one occasion, it helped to register a degree of desperation on the part of the Wahid government in pushing through the plan.

Indeed, such a degree of frustration on the part of the government was clearly evident when strong opposition from Islamic groups in the country blocked the plan. The challenge came not only from Muslim activists and Islamic political forces under the Central Axis, but also from influential *ulemas* from within NU as well. Soon after the government announced its plan, the Committee for Solidarity of the Islamic World (KISDI) warned of "a flood of Muslim tears" if the government opted to go ahead with its plan to establish trade relations with Israel. KISDI Chairman Ahmad Soemargono, also Deputy-Chairman of PBB, suspected that "trade and cultural ties are the seeds of diplomatic relations."[151] He also did not see any significant gain for Indonesia from establishing direct trade ties with Israel because "Israel's economic condition is not good." Moreover, in a more direct assault on the President, Soemargono maintained that such a plan only reflected Wahid's fear of American pressure.[152]

In the eyes of the opponents, all the reasons put forward by President Wahid and Foreign Minister Shihab were not tenable. For example, many contended that there was no evident correlation between having direct trade ties with Israel and the inflow of investment from the Jewish business community.[153]

Indonesia's intention to help facilitate the peace process in the Middle East after establishing ties with Israel was dismissed by Amien Rais.[154] As an analyst put it, "even the US is not able to bring peace to the region. Moreover, Indonesia is a third world country and is located far away [from the region]."[155] The military, in response to Minister Shihab's argument that direct ties with Israel would help Indonesian generals avoid the international tribunal, stated that it had nothing to do with the plan and that the plan should not be linked to the need to bargain with international human rights institutions.[156]

To counter the government's arguments, the opponents laid down a number of disadvantages that Indonesia might encounter if it established direct relations with Israel. First, relations with Israel have the potential to disrupt Indonesia's political and economic ties with Arab–Islamic countries. Second, Israel will take advantage of the relationship with Indonesia as a political instrument to advance its international legitimacy. Third, the plan creates further splits in the society and jeopardises the importance of the national reconciliation process, which in turns affects the restoration of political stability and the process of economic recovery. Fourth, Indonesia would become a lucrative market for Israeli products and not vice versa. Fifth, Indonesia would be seen to have deviated from its own Constitution which prescribes the country to oppose all forms of colonialism – an act that is still practised by Israel against the Palestinians. Finally, if the government really proceeded with the plan, the move would disappoint the Islamic community, especially those within the Central Axis coalition. This would seriously affect Wahid's legitimacy.[157] In other words, the plan would do more harm than good to both the government and the society.

Opposition to the plan was also manifested in the form of political pressure through *tabliq akbar* (Islamic public rally) and street demonstrations. On 12 November, KISDI staged a huge *tabliq akbar* in Jakarta criticising the government's plan. During the meeting, Chairman of KISDI Ahmad Soemargono appealed to the President and Foreign Minister "to cancel their plan and avoid making further steps (in dealing with Israel). Their attempt will plunge this nation into the Zionist embrace and disintegration."[158] In Yogyakarta, hundreds of students in the Muslim Student Action Front (KAMMI) – an organisation which played a significant role in bringing down Suharto's regime-also staged a peaceful protest against Wahid and Shihab.[159] A much larger protest was staged by KAMMI in Jakarta on 14 November.[160] A wave of protests and complaints by various Muslim organisations was also registered at the Parliament. The pressure on the Wahid government grew stronger when a group of influential NU *ulemas* also urged the President to cancel the plan. The group, led by Abdullah Faqih whom President Wahid regards as his guru, maintained that the President should cancel the plan because it had caused rifts in the society.[161]

Confronted with such strong opposition, President Wahid finally backed down. In a debate in the Parliament on 18 November, he declared that he

would only implement the plan after deep and lengthy studies. Foreign Minister Shihab confirmed afterwards that the government had decided to postpone the plan "until such a time is possible. The plan was really an appeal. It was never a government policy."[162] In an apparent attempt to assuage a sense of defeat, Minister Shihab explained that "direct trade relations with Israel were postponed because the government is responsive to the people's aspiration."[163] However, the episode clearly demonstrates that the Wahid government did not command an unlimited power in exercising its foreign policy choices; a position that was enjoyed by former President Suharto. The fact that Wahid himself is a prominent Islamic leader did not help much in his attempt to convince the whole Islamic community. In other words, Wahid is still subject to Islamic pressures, especially from the modernist Islam.

However, it should be noted that the Islamic factor alone, in the form of Muslim solidarity with the Palestinian cause, was not the only motivating factor. Several Muslim leaders have often stated that Indonesian Muslims' opposition to Israel is a function of Israel's attitude and policy towards Palestine. Amien Rais, for example, maintained that Indonesia would never recognise Israel as long as Palestine was still under its occupation.[164] Soemargono expressed a similar view when he stated that "Israel is a colonialist state. Why do we need to have relations with a colonialist?"[165] During a demonstration at DEPLU on 1 November, KISDI leaders stated that "our opposition to Minister Shihab's plan to establish direct trade ties with Israel is not only because as Muslims our ideology forbids it, but also because the Preamble of our Constitution does not permit such a relationship with Israel."[166] Such statements clearly gave additional weight to the opposition against any ties with Israel.

Apart from the debate on the question of costs and benefits, the Israel controversy also suggests the presence of the domestic political interests of the regime. First, through their attempt to establish direct trade ties with Israel, it has been argued that "Gus Dur and Alwi wished to be considered consistent in their high commitment to pluralism and inter-faith tolerance."[167] Second, in the context of Wahid's uneasy relationship with the Central Axis, the move can also be interpreted as an attempt by Wahid to display his independence from the Central Axis, despite the fact that Wahid owed much to this group for his election. In this context, it is hard to believe that he did not know that such a plan would certainly invite strong resistance from Central Axis leaders because many of them had been strong opponents to any attempt to open ties with Israel in the past. Unfortunately, President Wahid might have underestimated the strength of opposition to the idea. Third, the whole undertaking has also been suspected as an attempt to "shift public attention to the main reform agenda which is so far not settled (collusion, corruption, nepotism, Soeharto, the military's dual function, regional autonomy and so forth)"[168]-a classic case of the use of foreign policy for domestic purposes. In this context, the case of Israeli affairs once again

suggests that Indonesian foreign policy remains constrained by domestic political interests.

The episode demonstrates clearly the ability of Islamic political forces to impose a limit within which government foreign policy agendas can be pursued. The question of Palestine limits the possibility of any Indonesian government to embark upon a significant change in its official attitude towards Israel. Former President Suharto, despite his unchallenged grip on power and supreme authority on foreign affairs, was obliged to take great care not to offend the Muslim community on this issue.[169] For former President Habibie, as a transitional figure who sought to project an Islamic image as the basis of his legitimacy, the benefits attained from the absence of any type of relationship with Israel was self-evident. When President Wahid's attempt to test the limit of Islamic constraint on this issue also failed, despite his credential as an Islamic leader with more than 30 million followers, it was immediately clear that advocating an official relationship with Israel was a risky political business for the government to engage in. For Islamic political forces opposed to the idea, the success in preventing the establishment of official direct trade with Israel provided a new sense of confidence in their role in policy process and politics.

Islam and foreign policy under Wahid: the dilemma of dual identity

It has been argued earlier that Islam continues to enter foreign policy only as a secondary motivating factor. It does so also in form rather than substance. Meanwhile, the case of Israel cannot be considered as an indication that the Islamic factor has served as a primary factor that dictates Indonesian foreign policy. It only indicates the degree and nature of Islam's entry into foreign policy calculations. In that context, Wahid's decision to postpone his plan to establish direct trade relations with Israel was clearly driven by the need to defuse domestic political opposition rather by any religious considerations. Wahid seemed to be more concerned with the impact of negative reactions from the *ummah* on the political domain rather than the Islamic ideological content of their opposition. For Wahid, it is clear that while the first presents a real challenge to his political interests, the second is still debatable. In other words, the "Islamic factor" – as a set of guiding principles and values that should inform foreign policy – remains secondary in importance.

Despite the fact that Islam is now a major player in Indonesian politics, why has the Islamic factor not yet featured significantly in Indonesian foreign policy under President Wahid (at least until April 2000)?[170] One obvious reason is that foreign policy agendas and concerns of the Islamic community have not changed significantly since Suharto's years. Foreign policy interests of the Islamic community, and indeed of the Muslim elite, continue to be expressed in three particular issue-areas: a desire to have closer relations with

Arab–Islamic countries, policy towards Israel, and international events in which Muslims are perceived as the victims. The basis for this last issue-area is provided by the fact that Islam prescribes that solidarity among the Muslims is desirable and therefore should be attained. In the context of international relations, most Muslims view solidarity among Muslim states as desirable as well.[171] While the last issue-area might provide a broader scope for greater activism of Islam in foreign policy affairs, however, it is still oriented more towards a specific geographical area, namely the Arab–Islamic world, rather than towards the *ummah* worldwide. Moreover, the expression of Muslim solidarity tends to be displayed mainly in international events where an identifiable dimension of "Islam versus the West" is clearly visible.

Indeed, as demonstrated elsewhere, the place of Islam in Indonesian foreign policy remains ambiguous when the criteria of the solidarity of the Muslim brotherhood (*Ukhuwah Islamiyah*) in the international arena is employed. In this context, the Iranian conception of liberation of *Mustadh'afin* (the oppressed) from *Mustakbarin* (the arrogance of the world/oppressor), extended to international relations as a struggle to liberate the "oppressed states of the world," has its limits in Indonesia. The Muslim community has expressed its concerns over the plight of Muslims in Bosnia in the past, but similar sentiments were not evident in the case of Moro in the Philippines. While some within Indonesia's Muslim community expressed their solidarity to Muslims in Chechnya by condemning Russia, the same feeling is absent regarding the plight of Muslims in China. In such circumstances, there was no domestic pressure on the Indonesian government to exercise a worldwide Islamic solidarity in its foreign policy.

This feature continues to colour Indonesian foreign policy under President Wahid. For example, responses of the Indonesian Muslims to cases outside the Arab–Islamic world have been marked by a degree of measured pragmatism. When the Islamic movements opposed to Israel were criticised as practising double standards, the response from KISDI is illustrative:

> It is true that the Muslim community should sever its ties with Russia, because it oppresses Chechnyan Muslims. Also with the Philippines which oppresses the Moro Muslim. [That we do not,] is the weakness of the Muslim community. However, that does not mean the Muslim community practices double standards. *There is a degree of priority and emerging issues that need immediate response*.[172]

It is also interesting to note that when there was a need to display a degree of opposition to the West, although in its declaratory form, it was not followed by any reference to the importance of an international Islamic coalition. As discussed earlier, President Wahid repeatedly made an appeal for an "Asian Coalition" between Indonesia, China, and India as an attempt to counter the perceived American and Western dominance in international

relations. The Islamic factor is clearly absent in Indonesian foreign policy calculations when, as the largest Muslim country in the world, it proposes a coalition with countries where the status of Muslim minorities is still an issue.[173] This clearly demonstrates that a full expression of Islam in foreign policy remains constrained by national interests and domestic agendas of the national political elite. In other words, the nature of the relationship between Islam and foreign policy in Indonesia continues to be shaped by the primacy of domestic politics.

Moreover, there has not yet been any significant discourse within the Islamic community regarding how Islam should serve as a source of values in the conduct of foreign policy. There is still a very solid consensus among the foreign policy elite, including among the Muslim political elite, that *bebas-aktif* should remain as the cardinal principle of Indonesian foreign policy. There is also still a broad consensus in the country that Indonesia should remain committed to its non-aligned ideal which dictates the continuing opposition to all forms of imperialism and colonialism. As discussed earlier, the non-recognition policy towards Israel and strong moral support to the Palestinians have also been defined in this context. However, the gap continues to exist between Muslim aspirations on the one hand and the government's agenda on the other. While there is certainly a greater inclination among the Muslim community to express opposition to Israel and support to Palestine on the basis of Islamic solidarity, the Wahid government on the contrary demonstrated its willingness to make peace with the Jewish state.

Wahid's foreign policy preference, which reflects the *problematique* of "balancing" versus "dependence" and "form" versus "substance," certainly does not emerge from a vacuum. It resulted from, and reflects, a complex interaction between Wahid's personal traits and the nature of Indonesia as a Pancasila state – a state defined as neither theocratic nor secular. These two factors serve as another, and perhaps more significant, constraint on a more strident expression of Islam in Indonesian foreign policy under the Wahid presidency.

Wahid's personality and thinking as president, in his function as the chief executor of national policy, certainly influences the nature and characteristics of Indonesian foreign policy. In this regard, the central aspect of Wahid's personality is the fact that he is a prominent Islamic leader who has always expressed strong and relentless concerns over issues of nationalism (*kebangsaan*), democracy, and the relationship between Islam and the state in Indonesia.[174] Despite his official position as a leader of NU (the largest Islamic mass organisation in the world), Wahid was seen as "a leading proponent of secular democracy in Indonesia"[175] whose views "are often more nationalist than they are explicitly 'Islamic'."[176] Wahid strongly envisages the creation of a civil democratic society in Indonesia where "all citizens enjoy equal rights regardless of their religious, race, and other origins."[177] Wahid contends that democracy in a multicultural and multi-religious society such

as Indonesia, despite the fact that around 90 per cent of its population are Muslim, can only flourish in an environment of religious harmony and tolerance.

Within that context, Wahid strongly believes that the nature of Indonesia as a Pancasila state, and its emphasis on religious and ethnic tolerance, serves as a necessary precondition for the development of a genuine democracy in the country. For Wahid, "Pancasila represents an essential political compromise by stating that Islam should not be the formal basis of the state."[178] He strongly opposes any attempt to formalise religion (Islam) in state affairs.[179] According to Wahid, Islam should serve "as the inspirational base for a national framework of a democratic society. As such, Islam is not an alternative to other social systems, but a complementary factor among a wide spectrum of other factors in the nation's life."[180] Despite his inclination to separate religion from the state, however, it is misleading to conclude that Wahid does not see the need for Islam to play a political role. On the contrary, as observed by Ramage, "[Wahid] wants Islam, with NU as a prominent element in the Islamic movements, to be a force for peaceful change and transition towards a democratic, tolerant society."[181] In that context, Wahid consistently works to project NU as a pluralistic and non-sectarian Islam which firmly supports the view that *Negara Pancasila* (the *Pancasila* State) is the final form of Indonesian state.

It is such efforts that won Wahid popular support within the country, not only from his own traditional-based *santri* community, but indeed from almost all Indonesians. Wahid's "nationalist" view of Islam, democracy, and the role of religion in politics places him in a unique position as a prominant Islam leader with whom non-Muslims and secular-nationalists feel at ease. As mentioned earlier, it is this quality that primarily prompted Amien Rais, the leader of modernist Islam and Central Axis force, to nominate Wahid as presidential candidate in October 1999. After he was elected President, it should be no surprise to anybody that Wahid's assurance that the nature of Indonesia as a *Pancasila* state, as the basis for the development of democratic pluralism and religious tolerance, would remain unchanged. On two occasions, one before his own NU followers and the other at the PDI-P Congress, President Wahid reaffirmed his conviction that "there is no need to set up an Islamic state in Indonesia. . . . What is more important is to ensure that Islamic values are upheld [by its adherents]."[182] President Wahid also reaffirmed his credentials as a nationalist and religious leader when he stated that "nationalist and religious elements in Indonesian society both complemented each other" and "no one adhering to their religious teachings rejects nationhood and [on the other hand] no one has provoked the existing religions for the sake of nationhood."[183]

However, it is important to note that Wahid is not the only Islamic leader who rejects the notion of an Islamic state in Indonesia and embraces *Pancasila* as the basis of the state. Other mainstream Muslim leaders have also

repeatedly stated that the idea of an Islamic state is no longer an issue. Amien Rais, Chairman of PAN and the prominent leader of modernist Islam, has argued that "Pancasila is more than enough to be our state ideology and as a Muslim I don't see any contradiction whatsoever between the five principles and Islamic teaching."[184] Another modernist leader, former Minister of Religion Malik Fadjar of Muhammadiyah, also assured that "I do not see any sign or movements to set up an Islamic state [in Indonesia]."[185] Before the elections, for example, General Chairman of PPP Hamzah Haz declared that "PPP will continue to safeguard Pancasila as the basis of the state. If PPP wins the elections, [we] will not set up an Islamic state."[186] In other words, there is a solid consensus and commitment among Muslim leaders that post-Suharto Indonesia should remain a *Pancasila* state; a state defined as neither theocratic nor secular – a formulation that serves to accommodate the reality of Muslim majority on the one hand and the imperative to preserve a pluralistic state on the other.

The limits of the Islamic factor in Indonesian foreign policy after Suharto should be understood within such a dilemma of dual identity. Indonesia's identity as a *Pancasila* state manifests itself in foreign policy in the form of the principle of *bebas-aktif*. This principle emphasises that the Republic of Indonesia will promote and maintain good relations with any countries and organisations based on national interests rather than co-religious interests. In this regard, Wahid's government has not shown any intention to change that principle by, for example, forming an international Islamic coalition against the West. On the contrary, he advocated the establishment of direct trade ties with Israel and also the establishment of an "Asian coalition" to balance the West.

Consistency with the non-religious principle of foreign policy requires Indonesia to define the affinity and the nature of its relations and interaction with the outside world in terms of national priorities and the pragmatic interests of the state and the regime rather than in terms of co-religious considerations. Moreover, a foreign policy defined exclusively in terms of Islamic interests would have domestic implications as well. First, it might aggravate domestic differences not only between Islamic forces and the nationalists or between Muslim and non-Muslim, but within the Islamic community as well. Second, an Islamic foreign policy might also contradict Wahid's own political interests in his attempt to project an image as a national leader rather than merely a Muslim leader. In other words, the dilemma of dual identity continues to limit the expression of the Islamic factor in Indonesian foreign policy under President Wahid.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the extent to which foreign policy in the post-Suharto era has been influenced by Islamic considerations. The examination

of this factor during the presidencies of Habibie and Wahid once again confirmed that Islam has entered foreign policy only in form, not substance. Even though Islam has become a significant player in national politics since the fall of Suharto, foreign policy continued to be subject to constraints imposed by the reality of domestic weakness and the dilemma of dual identity. Despite the fact that both the governments of Habibie and Wahid respectively sought and bore strong Islamic credentials, they continued to pursue a foreign policy dictated by the imperative of maintaining relations with the West. Consequently, the non-religious character of Indonesian foreign policy was sustained.

Under President Habibie, Islam was central in the quest for the legitimacy and power of his government. That domestic requirement to cultivate an Islamic image faced by President Habibie also found its expression in foreign policy. However, the Islamic dimension to foreign policy was primarily meant to serve the legitimacy and political interests of Habibie's regime. The substance of foreign policy, which accorded high priority to the quest for external help in facilitating economic recovery, continued to reflect the political reality of domestic weakness. The growing role of Islam in domestic politics was not followed by significant changes in the non-religious character of Indonesian foreign policy. The imperative to preserve the nature of the Indonesian state as neither theocratic nor secular – the dual identity – continued to define the non-religious character of Indonesian foreign policy under President Habibie.

Under President Wahid, the secondary role of the Islamic factor in Indonesian foreign policy can also be understood within such a dilemma of dual identity. Wahid's emphasis on Indonesia's identity as a *Pancasila* state manifested itself in foreign policy in the form of the principle of *bebas-aktif*. This can be seen in Wahid's foreign policy pronouncements and conduct that sought to promote and maintain good relations with any countries and organisations based on national interests rather than co-religious interests. In this regard, Wahid's government did not show any intention of changing that principle by, for example, forming an international Islamic coalition against the West. He, on the contrary, advocated the establishment of direct trade ties with Israel and also the establishment of an "Asian coalition" to balance the West. In that context, foreign policy often served as a source of division within the Islamic community, especially within the broad coalition of Islamic parties that brought him to the presidency.

Indeed, due to his strong conviction that *Pancasila* should remain the basis of the Indonesian state, the dilemma of dual identity continued to influence Wahid's foreign policy. It is also that same dilemma that influences and sets the tone for the foreign policy of Wahid's successor, President Megawati Sukarnoputri who became Indonesia's fifth president in July 2001. Due to her strong secular-nationalist inclination, President Megawati Sukarnoputri is more likely to preserve Indonesia's dual identity. However, as discussed in the next chapter, she is also faced with the imperative of balancing her preference

for a non-religious foreign policy with the reality of Islam's growing importance in domestic politics. In such circumstances, foreign policy is bound to reflect the politics of precarious compromise between secular-nationalism and Islam. That compromise, as the analysis in Chapter 7 demonstrates, arises out of the reality of domestic weakness and the dilemma of dual identity.

7 Islam and foreign policy under Megawati

The politics of precarious compromise

The tenure of President Abdurrahman Wahid, whose rise to presidency was made possible by the support from a loose coalition of Islamic political forces, lasted only for twenty-one months (October 1999–July 2001). After weeks of intense political battle, he was finally replaced by Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of the founder of the Republic of Indonesia and the country's first president, Sukarno. The circumstances within which the transfer of power took place reflected a double irony in post-Suharto Indonesian politics. First, Wahid's downfall was orchestrated by the same coalition of Islamic political parties – the Central Axis – that brought him to power in the first place. Second, the rise of Megawati was made possible by support from the Central Axis, the same political force that had prevented her bid to presidency in July 1999. The concession was for Megawati to agree on a vice-president from the Islamist camp, namely, Hamzah Haz of the PPP. With the fall of Wahid and the rise of Megawati, a new political compromise, manifested in the formation of a coalition government between secular-nationalist and Islam, was set in motion.

This chapter examines the nature of Indonesian foreign policy within that context of political compromise. It first examines the nature of the Megawati government as a form of Islamic–nationalist marriage of convenience. The second section then looks at the foreign policy agenda and priorities of the Megawati government, and examines the extent to which that foreign policy agenda and priorities have or have not been influenced by Islamic considerations. Finally, this chapter looks at the impacts of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the USA on Indonesian foreign policy, especially in the context of the imperative of reconciling domestic weakness on the one hand and the dilemma of dual identity on the other. The analysis of Indonesia's response to the horrific event once again reveals the nature of Islamic influence on Indonesian foreign policy as a secondary factor.

The nature of the Megawati government: the Islamic–nationalist marriage of convenience

The fall of President Wahid

The game plan to bring Wahid down originated from the growing disaffection felt by Islamic political parties with the Wahid government. Enigmatic and erratic as he has always been, President Wahid's policies, both domestic and foreign, angered many people. That disaffection began as early as January 2000, barely three months after his election, when President Wahid fired three key ministers from his Cabinet, ignoring the fact that they came from parties that formed the core of his coalition government. For example, he first fired Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare Hamzah Haz, who was also Chairman of the PPP. Elite frictions grew stronger after the sacking of two other ministers, Minister of Trade and Industry Jusuf Kalla of Golkar and State Minister for Investment and State-Owned Enterprises Laksamana Sukardi of PDI-P. The move left a strong feeling among his coalition partners that the President was trying to consolidate his own position and abandon the power-sharing agreement.

The performance of the Wahid government also served as a source of resentment. Criticisms began to be expressed by important segments of the political elite when it became apparent that the Wahid government faced a serious problem in implementing its policies and delivering its promises. Many criticised that the Wahid government (a) was too preoccupied with political issues; (b) did not have a clear policy direction in solving the economic crisis and in preventing the problem of national disintegration; (c) did not have a sense of urgency and priority; (d) tended to create unnecessary new political problems; (e) was unable to improve the economy; and (f) failed to bring an end to communal and religious conflicts. When such wide-ranging criticisms were voiced by important segments of the political elite, mass organisations, business community, and the intellectuals, it was clear that domestic confidence in President Wahid's government, and indeed in the President himself, dwindled quickly.

Within six months of his presidency, President Wahid managed to antagonise three key forces in Indonesian politics at the same time. First, the President's relationship with leaders of the Islamic political parties, which supported his rise to the presidency, rapidly deteriorated. Second, Wahid's erratic behaviour also created some problems between the President and his Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri. Third, the relationship with Indonesia's Defence Force (TNI) also deteriorated rapidly due to the President's tendency to intervene in internal military affairs. When reports about the President's involvement in corruption scandals broke out, the pressure for him to resign began to mount.

When Wahid reacted defiantly against his critics, threats of impeachment were increasingly voiced, primarily by the Central Axis forces. By early 2001,

the opposition against Wahid's rule strengthened dramatically and led to the formation of an unlikely coalition between Megawati's secular-nationalist camp and the Islamic Central Axis forces. Support soon mounted for Vice-President Megawati to take over. When Golkar and the military joined the fray by dropping their support to the Wahid presidency, he was finally removed from power in late July 2001, paving the way for Megawati to become the fifth president of Indonesia. Realising that it would be difficult for her to rule without support from Islamic political forces, Megawati agreed to throw her party's support behind Hamzah Haz as vice-president – the man who had previously opposed a female president. Indeed, such a marriage of convenience between secular-nationalist and Islamic groups was made possible only by their common interest to remove Wahid from power.

The fragile nature of the Megawati coalition government became more apparent when, on 7 August, she unveiled the Cabinet line-up that clearly reflected a broad coalition that included members of the Central Axis, the military, and Golkar. Members of Wahid's party, the PKB, were conspicuously absent from the Cabinet. As her party only holds 153 out of 500 seats in the DPR and 185 of the 695 members of the MPR, President Megawati had no choice but to form such a broad coalition government in order to minimise the opposition to her rule. All parties with significant representation in the DPR and MPR, except Wahid's PKB, were included in her government. She awarded three posts in the Cabinet to Golkar, two to PPP, and one each for the PBB and PAN. Meanwhile, the military was represented in the Cabinet by four retired generals. Indeed, it has been observed that "the cabinet, therefore, has a truly 'rainbow' quality with the consequences that, apart from the PKB, there is no scope for a formal 'opposition' in the DPR."[1] And, by agreeing to have Hamzah Haz as her vice-president, Megawati also recognised the importance of Islamic credentials to strengthen the legitimacy of her government.

Return of the state identity problem

Even though the election of Hamzah Haz as vice-president as well as the composition of the government reflected Megawati's attempt to strike a balance between the secular-nationalist forces she represents and Islam, many doubted that such a marriage of convenience between the two groups would endure without any problems.[2] Many also doubted that the inclusion of two Islamic parties – PPP and PBB – in the Cabinet would mitigate the Islamic challenge to the Megawati government. As mentioned earlier, the two parties had been actively involved in the previous campaign, opposing a woman as president. More importantly, the question of state identity has long been the main point of contention between the PDI-P and the two Islamic parties. While the PDI-P clearly prefers to maintain a non-religious character of the Indonesian state, the PPP and the PBB have never hidden their intention to

bring back the Jakarta Charter, that obliges all Muslims to adhere to the *shariah* law, into the 1945 Constitution. As discussed earlier, the adoption of the Charter by the state, which was dropped from the Constitution on 18 August 1945, is tantamount to a change in Indonesia's secular state identity into an Islamic state. From the PDI-P's point of view, therefore, the election of Hamzah Haz as vice-president was clearly expected to reduce the call for the implementation of *shariah* law from some quarters of the Islamic community.[3]

Challenge to the Megawati government on the issue of state identity came in late August 2001, a few weeks after her election, when thousands of members of FPI launched a demonstration in front of the DPR. They demanded the revival of the Jakarta Charter in the 1945 Constitution and called for the implementation of the *shariah* law. The pressure became more significant when the PPP and the PBB officially proposed to the MPR that the Jakarta Charter be adopted in the 1945 Constitution during its Annual Session in November that year.[4] The move clearly demonstrated that the inclusion of PPP and PBB in the Megawati government had not changed the position of the two parties on the issue. In fact, many believed that the relaunching of the Jakarta Charter issue, especially by the PPP and the PBB, was meant to test the Megawati government.

The move, however, failed to attract much support from other political parties, including those parties with significant Islamic support. Responding to the demands by PPP and PBB, Amien Rais of PAN, for example, suggested that Muslims should pursue "a politics of salt, not flags or lipstick." In his view, the substance, rather than form or symbol (Islamic state), was more important for Muslims. Therefore, Amien maintained that "the desire to revive the Jakarta Charter is not relevant."[5] The call for the reinsertion of the Jakarta Charter was also rejected by PKB, Golkar, and as expected the PDI-P. Without the support from other major parties, the move by PPP and PBB only represented a minority voice in the MPR. Indeed, the PBB and PPP only hold 14 and 70 seats respectively in the MPR. Nevertheless, Hamzah Haz and other PPP and PBB leaders vowed that "they would keep the issue in the spotlight through the 2004 election campaign."[6] In other words, the issue of state identity has once again been brought back to the centre stage of politics in Indonesia.

In the wider context of Indonesia's Muslim community, however, the call for the reinsertion of the Jakarta Charter and the implementation of *shariah* law, which will in effect alter the Indonesian state identity as a Pancasila state, only has a slim chance of succeeding mainly because of the absence of support from the majority of Indonesian Muslims. When a similar attempt was launched by PPP and PBB in August 2000, mainstream Muslim organisations, such as NU and Muhammadiyah, had already rejected it.[7] When both parties tried again in November 2001, both NU and Muhammadiyah once again reiterated their disagreement. Despite the absence of majority support for an

Islamic state, the episode clearly demonstrates that post-Suharto Indonesia continues to face a problem from the dilemma of dual identity.

Persistent domestic weakness

In addition to the Islamic challenge on the issue of state identity, the Megawati government also functions within the context of continuing domestic weakness. While the election of Megawati has brought a sense of stability at elite level politics, the overall political, security, and economic challenges facing the new government are no less daunting. Megawati inherited an economy that was still hardly recovered from the shocks and impacts of the 1997 financial crisis. On the political field, the government is still faced with difficult challenges from the agenda of crucial political reforms, such as the constitutional amendments, electoral reform, controlling the military, and combating corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN). On the security front, the problems of law and order, inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts in Maluku and Central Sulawesi, and the threats of armed separatist movements in Aceh and Papua, continue to pose a serious challenge to the country.

During its first few weeks, the Megawati government brought a degree of hope to economic recovery. That hope was primarily encouraged by President Megawati's decision to give key economic posts in the Cabinet to professionals rather than to the politicians. There was also a sense of political stability which emanated from the possibility that the Megawati government would not be replaced until 2004. By January 2002, however, "the sense is also growing that while the government may be muddling along successfully enough, it is not being sufficiently vigorous in attacking the issues facing the country."[8] The magnitude of the problem proved to be too enormous for Megawati's economic team comprised of technocrats to resolve. The country's banking system is still far from being restructured, and the selling of assets remains an arduous process. The capital outflow, which amounted to US$5.9 billion in 2001, clearly suggested that investor confidence had not been restored.[9] Even in the first two months of 2002, foreign direct investment drooped to US$489.3 million, down from US$2.33 billion.[10] There has been no way out of the problem of massive foreign and domestic debts. On top of all the problems, corruption is still rampant, and by the end of 2001 Indonesia was regarded as the most corrupt country in the Asia-Pacific.

The Megawati government also found out how difficult it was to improve the economy in a volatile political climate. Despite the return of a degree of political stability at the elite level, broader political reform is far from complete. All the problems faced by the previous Wahid government continue to pose a similarly difficult challenge for the Megawati government. Here, it should be emphasised that the fall of Wahid and the rise of Megawati clearly reflect the complex nature of Indonesian politics in the post-Suharto era. After Suharto's downfall in May 1998, anti-New Order forces – represented by

Wahid, Megawati, and Amien Rais – soon found themselves incapable of sustaining a united front necessary for carrying out the task of democratic reform. They had to face the divisive nature of a highly competitive political system in which old forces – the military and Golkar – remain influential and powerful. In that context, it is clear that despite Suharto's departure, the new government still presides over the system he had created. Indeed, despite common reference to the emergence of an *Indonesia Baru* (New Indonesia), today's Indonesia has not yet managed to make a complete break with the past.

The security situation also continues to be a strong reminder of how weak the Indonesian government has become since the outbreak of economic and political crisis in 1997–1998. Communal violence and armed separatist movements continue to plague Indonesia, threatening the country's national integration, both in social and territorial senses. The situation in Poso, Central Sulawesi, and Maluku, remain volatile despite the government's attempts to bring the conflicts in those areas to an end. The efficacy of the government approach, which relies more on a symbolic peace agreement between conflicting parties, has been doubted due to the lack of discipline within the security apparatus in the field. Unlike the Wahid government's soft approach, the Megawati government seems to favour more repressive measures in dealing with the problems of the separatist movements in Aceh and Papua. In Papua, elements of the military have been allegedly involved in the murder of a leading pro-independence leader, Theys Eluay. In Aceh, the security situation remains unchanged. Despite the ongoing peace talks between the government and the rebels, armed clashes between the rebels (GAM) and security forces continued, with casualties in both camps increasing. Indeed, violence continued to escalate during the first six months of Megawati's presidency.

On balance, it can be argued that the economic, political, and security condition of Megawati's Indonesia continues to reflect a persistent reality of domestic weakness. That reality consequently forces the government to pay more attention and devote most of its resources to solving mounting domestic problems. In such circumstances, the conduct of foreign policy will be directed to serve domestic political and economic interests. In other words, Indonesian foreign policy under the Megawati government, like foreign policies of the previous governments, will also be defined by the domestic political reality rather than by ideological and religious considerations. As discussed below, the Megawati government also pursues a foreign policy that bears a non-religious character.

The absence of Islamic agenda in foreign policy

Unlike former President Wahid who tended to initiate new and often controversial foreign policy initiatives, President Megawati seemed to prefer the return to a conventional agenda that reflects national priorities. In the speech

during the announcement of her Cabinet, named *Kabinet Gotong Royong* (Mutual Help Cabinet), President Megawati unveiled the "six-point working program" (*Enam Program Kerja*), namely (1) maintain national unity; (2) continue reform and democratisation process; (3) normalise economic life; (4) uphold law, restore security and peace, and eradicate corruption, collusion, and nepotism; (5) restore Indonesia's international credibility; and (6) prepare for the 2004 general election.[11] Even though the "six-point working program" did not provide a sense of policy direction, it did provide a sense of the priorities that the Megawati government intended to pursue. In that context, foreign policy would be geared towards supporting the attainment of the six national priorities.

The focus on domestic priorities was clearly demonstrated in the absence of reference to foreign relations in the President's first speech before the DPR on 16 August 2001. The speech, which outlined various challenges and problems facing her government and the country, only referred to foreign policy in passing when she simply stated that the government would conduct a "free and active foreign policy, recovering state's and nation's dignity and returning the trust of foreign countries, including international donors institutions and investors, to the government."[12] This statement clearly demonstrates that instead of pursuing a new course in foreign policy, the Megawati government reinvigorated familiar themes in Indonesian diplomacy in which the non-religious character of foreign policy was preserved and reinforced. In other words, Megawati's foreign policy clearly shows a sense of continuity with that of the New Order's.

First, the emphasis on free and active foreign policy reflected the intention to bring back Indonesian foreign policy to serve its traditional functions of fulfilling domestic political and economic interests. The return of the traditional functions of foreign policy is clearly reflected in the way foreign policy is conceived as an instrument to support the attainment of national interests. For example, President Megawati contended that "my visit to the US, the United Nations, Japan and my attendance at the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in Shanghai recently, were intended to be a measure to improve the cooperation for the sake of our national interests."[13] Minister of Foreign Affairs Hassan Wirayuda also reaffirmed "a consistency in free and independent foreign policy carried out to serve national interests, with a focus to respond to real challenges facing us today."[14]

Second, Megawati's foreign policy also echoed the New Order's theme of using foreign policy as an instrument to shape a peaceful international environment, which would in turn facilitate the internal recovery process at home. Explaining her visit to nine ASEAN countries immediately after her confirmation as president, for example, President Megawati maintained that the visit was meant to "create a strategic environment conducive for the implementation of domestic recovery measures."[15] Foreign Minister Wirayuda reiterated the use of foreign policy for such purpose when he stated that "in

order to achieve the Cabinet's programs, we need a conducive external environment, namely an environment that is stable, secure, peaceful, and prosperous."[16]

Third, the Megawati government also reaffirmed the return of the "concentric circles" concept in Indonesian foreign policy that recognises Southeast Asia as the most important region for Indonesia, and also the importance of East Asia, the United States, and South Pacific countries. Especially on the importance of Southeast Asia, President Megawati maintained that "besides reaffirming ASEAN as the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy, the visits were aimed at improving bilateral relations with the countries in the region."[17] With such statements, the Megawati government clearly intends to restore the place of ASEAN as the cornerstone of Indonesian foreign policy. She also maintained that "of no less importance [for Indonesia] is West Pacific with which, since August, Indonesia has become the dialogue partner of the Pacific Forum."[18] The importance of the United States was confirmed by Foreign Minister Wirayuda who saw President Megawati's visit to Washington on 18 September 2001 as "an important pillar in our attempt to develop a new era between Indonesia and the United States."[19]

Reference to the Arab–Islamic world, let alone to the importance of Islam in foreign policy, has been conspicuously absent. Unlike the Habibie and Wahid governments, the Megawati government has not made any specific reference to the place of the Middle East or the Arab–Islamic world in Indonesian foreign policy. Major policy pronouncements, such as the President's speeches before the MPR and DPR, and also the Year End Statement of the Foreign Minister, were also void of any expression of co-religionist solidarity on issues such as Afghanistan or the Israel–Palestine conflict. On American attacks on Afghanistan, Foreign Minister Wirayuda maintained that "any military action in Afghanistan should have very specific, appropriate and limited targets."[20] In his Year End Statement, Minister Wirayuda even "welcome[d] the creation of a new government in Afghanistan and support the efforts at peace-building, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of Afghanistan by the international community."[21] Moreover, the secondary importance of the Arab–Islamic world in Megawati's foreign policy was clearly demonstrated by the absence of any plan to visit Middle Eastern countries during her first year in power.

The absence of the Islamic factor in Megawati's foreign policy can also be understood in the context of domestic weakness. Economic difficulties, whose recovery requires international support, clearly dictate a foreign policy that continues to seek close relations with Western countries and its international financial institutions. This reality was shown in the government's reaffirmation of the importance of the United States, the IMF, and the World Bank in Indonesian foreign policy. Immediately after announcing her Cabinet, President Megawati left for a series of visits to ASEAN countries. It was no coincidence that Megawati made the USA, and then Japan as the first and

second destinations of her foreign visits outside Southeast Asia, followed by visits to China and South Korea in March 2002, and then to several European countries in mid-June 2002. From the order of those visits alone, one can clearly see an affirmation of the importance of ASEAN, Northeast Asia, the USA and Europe for Indonesia.

Even though the agenda, priorities, and the conduct of diplomacy under President Megawati reflect Indonesia's return to its conventional foreign policy, thus reinforcing the continuity rather than change with that of the New Order's foreign policy, the influence of the Islamic factor cannot be overlooked. Despite the absence of an Islamic agenda in Megawati's foreign policy, her government – like other previous governments-could not simply ignore the Islamic voices on international issues with an identifiable Islamic dimension. President Megawati, like all her predecessors, is also faced with the challenge of managing the domestic weakness and the dilemma of dual identity. Indonesia's response to the September 11 terrorist attacks in the USA clearly demonstrates how such a challenge had to be dealt with through a politics of precarious compromise balancing the need to overcome domestic weaknesses through international support on the one hand, and the necessity to recognise the Islamic voices on the other. And, not unlike during the previous periods, the Islamic factor once again sets the limit within which foreign policy can be carried out.

The Islamic challenge in foreign policy: dealing with "September 11"

The impact of the horrific terrorist attacks in the United States on Indonesian domestic politics constituted the first serious challenge to President Megawati since she became Indonesia's fifth president in July 2001. The tragic event unleashed a wave of anti-American sentiments that quickly became a formidable constraint to attempts by the Megawati government to restore its international credibility and accelerate the economic recovery. The event also demonstrates the vulnerability of the Megawati government to the Islamic challenge in its attempt to consolidate political power. In the event, the Megawati government was forced to find a balance between the USA's demands for full support for its war against terrorism on the one hand, and radical Islamic groups' outcry at home demanding the government take a primarily anti-USA stance on the other.

Indeed, in formulating its official attitude towards September 11 and Washington's subsequent response, the Indonesian government was torn between two conflicting positions. It recognised that Indonesia would soon have to undergo a delicate balancing act. On the one hand, government officials loyal to President Megawati were greatly aware that the horrific event would become a serious international issue with wide-ranging implications for the whole world, including Indonesia. In that context, Indonesia might not

have many choices but to express its support for the American call to combat terrorism. On the other hand, it also recognised the need to carefully weigh its position against possible domestic reactions, particularly from the Muslim community. To that effect, the Megawati government was aware that its support for the American call for a global war on terrorism might be construed at home as an act of submission to the USA.

The pressure was strongly felt by the Indonesian government as President Megawati was scheduled to leave for the United States to meet President George Bush on 19 September, a week after the World Trade Center tragedy. As the date for her departure was approaching, the situation in Jakarta quickly turned to her disadvantage. Several Islamic groups began to stage protests on the streets of Jakarta, and expressed their anger at the American accusation that Osama bin Laden was the mastermind of the September 11 attacks; an act they saw as America's attempt to scapegoat Islam. The timing of Megawati's departure became all the more delicate when her Vice-President, Hamzah Haz of the Muslim-oriented United Development Party (PPP), began to express his displeasure at what he saw as an attempt by the USA to discredit the Islamic world. He not only resented accusations by the USA against the Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden but went to the extent of saying that the attacks "will hopefully cleanse America of its sins."[22]

President Megawati flew to the USA with such a domestic political scene in the background. The official Indonesian position was revealed by President Megawati directly to President George Bush during a meeting at the White House on 19 September. She told her host that "we mourn with America, that we share your grief and outrage, and that we strongly condemn terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations." She also stressed that "Indonesia is ready to cooperate with the US and other civilized countries on counter-terrorism."[23] President Megawati also "condemned the barbaric and indiscriminate acts against innocent civilians," and pledged "to cooperate with the international community in combating terrorism."[24] In New York, President Megawati called September 11 "the worst atrocity . . . in the history of civilization."[25]

In return for her support, Washington pledged to continue its support to help Indonesia rebuild its economy shattered by the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s, and expressed continuing support for Indonesia's difficult transition towards democracy. The most encouraging promise by Washington to the Indonesian government was the pledge to seek for a renewal of military ties between the two countries, which had been disrupted since September 1999, including the promise to lift an embargo on sales of non-lethal military items and the establishment of a bilateral security dialogue. In total, Washington pledged to provide financial aid of US$657.7 million to Indonesia.[26]

In Indonesia, however, the good news was received with a degree of suspicion, especially within radical Islamic circles. Jafar Umar Thalib, the leader of Laskar Jihad, maintained that Megawati's visit to the USA "clearly ignored the feeling of the ummah." The visit, he said, "can be seen as a

form of support by Megawati to America's plan to attack Afghanistan."[27] Consequently, anti-American protests grew larger and stronger, especially in response to reports of an imminent American attack on Afghanistan. Mass demonstrations against the USA were now also staged in several other cities by several Islamic organisations.

The scope of the protests became alarming when several hardline Islamic groups, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and the Laskar Jihad (Jihad Troops), began to warn Americans to leave Indonesia immediately.[28] They also threatened to use their paramilitaries to "sweep" hotels and other places in search of American visitors. Some even went to the extent of threatening to attack American facilities and interests in Indonesia if the USA carried out its plan to attack Afghanistan. Concerned about the growing magnitude of anti-American protests and threats to American interests and citizens, the US Ambassador to Indonesia, Robert Gelbard, filed a request for a security guarantee to the Indonesian police.[29] When he felt that the police would not be able to extend such a guarantee, the US Embassy was forced to close for two weeks.[30]

The most serious development, however, occurred on 25 September when the Indonesian Council of Ulamas (MUI), stated its position. The Council, a semi-official body of Indonesian clerics, issued a declaration calling "on Muslims in the world for *jihad fii sabilillah* (fight in the path of Allah) should the aggression by the U.S. and its allies against Afghanistan and the Islamic world occur."[31] The MUI's Secretary-General Din Syamsuddin, arguing that "the aggression towards Afghanistan could be seen as [an act of] hostility and hatred against Islam and Muslims, and as [an act of] injustice, terrorism and a form of imperialism," called on "the U.S. government to reflect on the injustices it has been responsible for and the double standards it has adopted, especially the violations against human rights that have affected the Muslim community."[32] Two other important points included in the Council's statement – the condemnation of the September 11 terrorist attacks and its opposition to the planned "sweeping" against American citizens – were understandably overshadowed by the call for jihad. In effect, the MUI's declaration of jihad was seen as "one of the harshest statements of support for the Taliban heard from any state-sponsored religious body in the Muslim world."[33]

The pressure intensified when the USA finally went ahead with its plan to attack Afghanistan and the Taliban. As anti-US protests now began to pose a challenge to the Megawati presidency, on 8 October the government was forced to issue a six-point statement on the issue.[34] It stated, first, that the government expressed a deep concern that a military act was finally carried out. Second, Indonesia noted the statement by the American government that the operation is only launched against terrorist training camps and military installations, and that the operation is not meant as an act of hostility against Islam. Third, the government of Indonesia hopes that the operation is strictly limited in terms of targets and duration so that it would minimise civilian

casualties. Fourth, Indonesia calls on the United Nations to undertake collective response to restore the situation. Fifth, the government of Indonesia warns that reactions and sympathy from Indonesian society should not be expressed in ways contrary to the law. Finally, Indonesia would provide humanitarian assistance to ease the suffering of the people of Afghanistan.

Such a position, however, angered radical groups in Indonesia, especially because the government failed to condemn US military action against Afghanistan. The statement, which stopped short of criticising the US military campaign, was also seen as a statement of support to the USA. Consequently, anti-American protests intensified. Radical groups began to burn American flags and an effigy of President Bush. Threats to expel American citizens intensified. In Makassar, South Sulawesi, the Japanese flag at its consulate there was hauled down by a group of radical students.[35] Several Islamic organisations launched a campaign to boycott American goods and products. Some even began to register volunteers to be sent to join the Taliban government in Afghanistan in their fight against the USA. The MUI condemned the US military campaign as "a manifestation of arrogance and oppression," renewed its call for jihad, and urged the Indonesian government to temporarily freeze its diplomatic relations with the USA and its allies.[36] Din Syamsuddin even declared that "the MUI will not bar the Muslims [in Indonesia] from taking up arms to wage *jihad*. That is part of human rights."[37] The call by the MUI that Indonesia break its diplomatic ties with the USA were increasingly voiced by other radical Islamic groups.

Such turn of events clearly put the Megawati government on the defensive. Megawati finally bowed to pressure when, on 14 October at the Istiqlal Grand Mosque in Jakarta, she issued sharp criticisms of the US military campaign in Afghanistan. She declared that "it is unacceptable that someone, a group or even a government-arguing that they are hunting down perpetrators of the terror-attack people or another country for whatever reason." She also maintained that "there are rules that need to be observed. Without observing those rules, the action initially meant to combat violence at the end would itself become a new act of terror and violence" and "blood cannot be cleansed with blood."[38] The speech, especially the criticisms against the USA, was widely seen in Indonesia and abroad as a significant departure from Indonesia's previous stance on the issue. As mentioned earlier, in its statement on 8 October, the Megawati government refrained from criticising the American attack, expressing instead the hope that "the operation is strictly limited in terms of targets and duration so that it would minimise civilian casualties."[39]

The next day, however, the police dispersed a major anti-American protest by Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) in front of the parliament building in Jakarta. There was violence on both sides, and more than a dozen people were injured when the police broke up the demonstration. It seemed that the message was clear. The government would not tolerate further threats to social order and its international reputation. Vice-President Hamzah Haz, who had been

critical of American policy after September 11, by mid-October was toning down his rhetoric and downplaying differences between his own and Megawati's positions.[40] Within days, the sights of anti-American protesters calling for jihad disappeared from the streets of Jakarta and other major cities. Habieb Raziq, leader of FPI and the most vocal opponent of the American campaign in Afghanistan, began to tone down his rhetoric and now filed a lawsuit against the police, claiming that the police had violated his human rights. He also publicly stated that FPI members had not searched for foreigners and would not do so in the future, maintaining that "the issue is only talks."[41]

Regardless of the effects of the speech on the streets in Jakarta, the change of tone in the Megawati government's position inevitably attracted reaction from abroad. A strong criticism was soon directed at Megawati's speech by Australia, a close American ally in the Pacific. Prime Minister John Howard remarked that the speech could bring instability to the Asia-Pacific region.[42] Meanwhile, the response in Washington was decidedly muted, although some government officials saw the remarks as being "not helpful." White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer simply commented on Megawati's criticism by saying that "the best defense [against terrorism] is a strong offense."[43] And, unlike PM Howard, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage downplayed the remarks, saying that he believed that Indonesia would continue to be supportive of the USA.[44] However, one American analyst simply labelled Megawati's speech as an instance of "hypocrisy."[45] For others, Megawati's criticism "was largely meant for internal consumption."[46] Indeed, the modification in the Indonesian attitude constituted a form of compromise that President Megawati had to take amid strong reactions from some Islamic circles.

That compromise was also displayed in the Indonesian attitude towards the US-led global war on terrorism. Indeed, despite a significant decrease in overt anti-American sentiments on the streets of Jakarta, the Indonesian government continued to stress its opposition to the American military campaign in Afghanistan. Coordinating Minister for Political, Social, and Security Affairs Let.Gen (ret.) Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, for example, warned that the US-led attacks on Afghanistan could spark a clash of civilisations. Yudhoyono feared that "if this conflict widens, then many countries will be destabilized. This will create a new unwanted conflict, for example the West against non-Western countries, the United States versus the rest of the world." He also maintained that despite Indonesia's support to the efforts to combat terrorism, it saw the use of excessive military force by the USA as counterproductive.[47]

At the end of October, President Megawati called on the USA to stop its bombings of Afghanistan, especially during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and Christmas. Speaking at the opening of the MPR Annual Session, she maintained that "prolonged military action is not only counter-productive but also can weaken the global coalition's joint effort to combat

terrorism."[48] She also stated that "we call for the need for a humanitarian pause to provide an opportunity to handle humanitarian aspects, and to find a way to find a solution via political and diplomatic means."[49] She also demanded that the USA offer proof that Osama bin Laden was responsible for the September 11 attacks. Megawati reminded the USA that "it is an obligation of every party to help find and show to the world the convincing evidence of connection of any elements allegedly involved in these irresponsible actions before taking measures to combat terrorism."[50]

Indonesia displayed its uneasiness with the US-led coalition against terrorism when Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda, speaking during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Shanghai, maintained that Indonesia wanted to see the United Nations take the leading role and initiate a collective response in combating international terrorism.[51] After meeting with US Secretary of State Colin Powell, Foreign Minister Wirayuda stated that his government believed "a collective international response" to the September 11 terrorist attacks was preferable to unilateral US military action.[52] Indonesia's reluctance to fully become part of an American-led coalition against terrorism was also evident when the USA demanded that every country took necessary measures to freeze financial assets of organisations suspected to have links with international terrorism.

Again, domestic political calculation seemed to have played an important role here. For Indonesia, the US demand, despite being backed by UN Resolution No. 1333/2000 and No. 1373/2000, presented the government with a difficult dilemma. As noted by Sheldon Simon, "to scrutinize [Islamic charities] in Indonesia risks a significant Muslim backlash. Moreover, neither the Finance Ministry nor Bank Indonesia is equipped to monitor the thousands of financial transactions coming from overseas to nongovernmental organizations."[53] The reality on the ground, however, was murkier than Simon suggested. Even after Indonesia agreed to undertake investigation, after a long delay, responses from Indonesian officials to the request were still marked by a degree of reluctance and resentment. The Governor of Central Bank, for example, responded to the request by saying that it was easier said than done. Cabinet Minister Yusril Ihza Mahendra of the Islamic-based Moon and Star Party (PBB) maintained that "we cannot just freeze those assets unless we have solid evidence."[54]

In general, however, Indonesia came to be seen as not being interested in pursuing the issue of terrorism. Some US officials criticised Indonesia, accusing it of being too slow, and uncooperative.[55] An American analyst bluntly stated that "the Americans are keeping a scorecard for what is being done in Asia. Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines are getting almost-perfect scores for reining in the terrorists." In contrast, "the Indonesians have got a big fat goose egg for not trying hard enough."[56] Pressure on Indonesia "to do more," however, began to mount when an Indonesian national, Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, was arrested in Manila for illegally keeping tons of explosive materials.

Later, al-Ghozi confessed that he was a member of Jemaah Islamiyah group, which is believed to have maintained close ties with Al-Qaeda.[57] Following the arrest of al-Ghozi, Malaysian police also arrested members of the Malaysian Mujahidin Group (Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, KMM). An Indonesian Muslim cleric, Abu Bakar Baashir, the leader of Yogyakarta-based Indonesian Mujahideen Council (MMI), was accused as the founder of the organisation.

Malaysia and Singapore officials were convinced that Abu Bakar Baashir is also the head of Jemaah Islamiyah group. Malaysian authorities have long been trying to imprison him on the charge that he was the main figure behind the militancy of the KMM movement.[58] The KMM is also accused of being behind the attempt to overthrow the Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad and to set up an Islamic state in Malaysia. The KMM was also reportedly involved in the conflict between Muslims and Christians in Ambon by providing money to fund the Muslim side in Ambon, which was valued at 225 million rupiah.[59] However, Indonesia continues to deny and reject allegations that "Indonesia was home to groups or individuals who were part of a regional terrorist network."[60] Government officials also rejected allegations about possible links between Indonesian radical groups and international terrorist networks.

Fear of a backlash from Muslim groups in the country seems to be the reason for such denial. President Megawati seems to realise that a showdown with her coalition partners over the war on terrorism was not worth the effort. As discussed earlier, Vice-President Hamzah Haz has been one of the most ardent critics of US military action in Afghanistan. Hamzah's comments on the issue put Megawati in a difficult position vis-à-vis the larger Islamic community. He, for example, maintained that "it is our obligation to help Afghanistan because it is a Muslim country" and "the demands of the Muslim people here have been echoed by the government."[61] In order to avoid an overt tension within the government, President Megawati had no other choice but to compromise by becoming more critical of the American military campaign in Afghanistan. In that context, therefore, Indonesia's critical attitude of the USA was driven more by the domestic political interests of the regime than by the regime's belief in the need to project co-religious solidarity values.

Indeed, Indonesia's opposition to the American campaign in Afghanistan served as a declaratory form of foreign policy meant to appease domestic pressure at home. President Megawati did not make any reference to Islam as the basis of her criticism of the American campaign in Afghanistan. Nor did she propose any concrete action to follow up her government's position. On the contrary, the substance of Megawati's foreign policy continued to recognise the importance of the USA for Indonesian national interests. The government, for example, rejected the demand by Islamic groups that Indonesia break up its diplomatic ties with the USA in order to show its solidarity with fellow Afghan Muslims. Responding to such demands,

Coordinating Minister for Political, Social, and Security Affairs Susilo Bambang Yudoyono, for example, warned that "we should not resort to emotional responses."[62] Foreign Minister Wirayuda also criticised the demands as "emotional and not proportional" and warned that the severance of diplomatic ties with the USA would make Indonesia the most radical state, even compared to radical Arab countries.[63]

The episode once again demonstrates the nature of Islamic influence upon Indonesian foreign policy, especially in the post-Suharto era. Indonesia's response to September 11 revealed that while the government recognised the importance of the Islamic factor, it refused to be dictated by it. While that recognition was accommodated through a declaratory form of criticism against the USA, the substance of foreign policy continues to be defined by domestic political and economic interests rather than by the call for expressing co-religious solidarity with the Taliban regime. And, more importantly, the government position was also strongly supported by the majority of Muslim leaders in the country. In other words, despite the call from some Muslim groups for a greater co-religious solidarity, domestic priorities and interests remained the most important determinants of Indonesian foreign policy. And, those priorities and interests set the limit within which Islamic influence in foreign policy can be expressed.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the nature of the Indonesian government under President Megawati, the place of Islam in politics, and the extent to which her foreign policy has or has not been influenced by Islamic considerations. Given the political circumstances during which Megawati was appointed as Indonesia's fifth president, she was obliged to make a political compromise resulting in the formation of a coalition government between her secular-nationalist group and Islam. That marriage of convenience, however, failed to put the question of state identity to rest. In fact, some Islamic political parties and Muslim groups, including the party led by her Vice-President, went on with their effort to change Indonesia's "neither secular nor theocratic" identity into an identity more in tune with Islam. Such efforts continue to serve as a reminder about the dilemma of dual identity facing the Indonesian state.

Indonesia under President Megawati also continues to reflect a reality of domestic weakness. The nature of her coalition government itself clearly demonstrates the fragility of Indonesian politics marked by the revival of competing ideological preferences, especially between secular-nationalism and Islam, within a highly competitive post-authoritarian political system. That fragility is then exacerbated by the enduring economic hardships that force the government to rely on the international community, especially the West. The agenda, priorities, and the conduct of Megawati's foreign policy,

like the foreign policy of her predecessors, continue to be defined and dictated by that reality of domestic weakness.

On taking over power from President Wahid in July 2001, President Megawati sought the return of conventional agendas into Indonesian foreign policy. For Megawati, the main function of foreign policy is to serve national interests and agendas. In that context, rather than pursuing a new course in foreign policy, the Megawati government reiterated Indonesia's commitment to prioritise its relationships according to concentric circles of interests. Within such circles, the first priority is given to fostering good relationships with its neighbouring states in Southeast Asia as the most important circle of political and security interests, and then Northeast Asia and the United States as the most important circle of economic interests. The return to the concentric circle concept clearly reaffirms Indonesia's place in, and proximity with, the Asia-Pacific rather than with the Arab–Islamic world. With such agendas and priorities, the non-religious character of foreign policy was preserved and reinforced.

The influence of Islam, however, is not entirely absent, nor can it be ignored altogether. As her government itself was a product of delicate and precarious political compromise between secular-nationalism and Islam, the imperative of such a balancing act would continue to be a political necessity. In foreign policy, the imperative of political compromise, that serves the purpose of recognising the Islamic factor on the one hand and maintaining the interests of regime and the government on the other, requires a similar balancing act. Indeed, the nature of Islamic expression in foreign policy under President Megawati, as a result of this delicate balancing act, was well demonstrated in the case of the Indonesian response to September 11 and subsequent American retaliation against Al-Qaeda and Afghanistan.

The importance of domestic priorities and regime interests initially led President Megawati to express full support to the USA. However, the growing significance of Islam in domestic politics forced President Megawati to make some political compromises. That compromise was undertaken through a display of a critical view against the US military campaign in Afghanistan. At the same time, however, the government also ensured that the compromise would not go so far that it sacrificed the political and economic interests of the regime. The government firmly rejected the demands by some Islamic groups that Indonesia sever its diplomatic ties with the USA. In that context, the Islamic factor, while clearly functioning as a brake that forced the government to make some compromises, was not allowed to dictate the overall substance of foreign policy. Just as under the previous governments, Islam continues to play a secondary role in Indonesian foreign policy under President Megawati. And, that secondary role reflects the dilemma of dual identity and the reality of domestic weakness that continue to characterise the Indonesian state.

8 Conclusion

Islam, domestic weakness, and the dilemma of dual identity

Islam has entered Indonesian foreign policy only in form rather than substance. That peculiarity in the relationship between Islam and foreign policy reflects the constraints imposed on foreign policy by the primary consideration of domestic priorities and the interests of the state and the regime. In more specific terms, such constraints stem from the dilemma of state identity and also the condition of internal weakness. During the period of Suharto's New Order, Indonesian foreign policy towards the Arab–Islamic world or international issues with identifiable Islamic dimensions constituted a classic case of the use of foreign policy for domestic political purposes. It is also important to note that while Indonesian foreign policy is non-Islamic in character, that foreign policy has been described as non-contradictory and not detrimental to Islamic interests. This approach was adopted by President Suharto in order to avoid offence to the Muslim community. For many Muslim groups, however, Indonesian foreign policy has not adopted Islamic aspirations fully. In other words, there has been a gap between the substance of official foreign policy and the aspirations of the Muslim community.

For Muslim groups, the main issue in Indonesian foreign policy in relation to Islam is not on how to formulate and implement an Islamic foreign policy per se, but more on the need to improve relations with Muslim states and pay more attention to issues in the Islamic world and take meaningful initiatives to address them. In the context of domestic politics, however, such expectations raised the question of how far relations with Muslim states should be improved, to what extent attention should be given to Islamic issues, and how far the involvement of Indonesia in issues in the Islamic world could be pursued without bringing about internal consequences which might threaten Indonesia's identity as a country which has not based its state affairs on Islam. In other words, the question of Islam in Indonesian foreign policy reflects the dilemma of dual identity in domestic politics. Suharto tended to resolve that dilemma by putting more emphasis on Islam in terms of form, but continuing to maintain the substance of foreign policy which prioritised non-religious dimensions.

That approach was closely linked to Suharto's preference to use foreign policy for domestic political purposes, in which political stability, economic

development, and regime security and legitimacy constituted the most important agenda. Until 1989, the Islamic factor was given attention with the object of reducing what Suharto perceived as a threat (from Islam) to his power. Since 1990, however, the Islamic factor was given attention in the context of broadening and strengthening the power base and legitimacy of the regime at a time when Islam was seen to be a potent force which could help fulfil those objectives. The external interests of the regime to lead the NAM, which required more attention to be paid to international issues in the developing world, was partly served by paying more attention to the Arab–Islamic world. The Islamic factor in Suharto's foreign policy was once again made to function as an instrument by which the New Order regime reconciled its domestic political interests on the one hand and the regime's external interests on the other.

In practical terms, it seems that the primacy of domestic imperatives remained an important factor that set the context for continuity in Indonesian foreign relations which could not repudiate the need to accord high priority to good and close relationships with the West and its international institutions. The case of the IMF clearly demonstrates that feature. And, indeed, the same dilemma was faced by Suharto's successor, President B. J. Habibie. Voices of resentment against the IMF and the USA within the domestic constituents, including from the Muslim community, have not been translated into an official anti-West policy. Internal weaknesses exacerbated by the economic and political crisis required Indonesia to rely on help from the IMF, the West, and the international community in general.

That requirement serves as a constraint to an expansive expression and projection of Islamic agendas into foreign policy. Domestic constraints, in the form of internal weakness that requires external help to address it, manifest themselves in government policy that continues to avoid a formal expression of the Islamic factor in foreign policy. In such circumstances, Habibie's government could not afford to change the course of Indonesian foreign policy. In other words, Habibie's government also tried to draw a fine line between form and substance when it came to the Islamic factor in foreign policy; a familiar feature of the approach previously adopted and pursued by former President Suharto.

The continued dilemma of state identity also serves as an additional constraint to this characteristic of Habibie's foreign policy. An exclusive manifestation of the Islamic factor in Indonesian foreign policy is constrained by the nature of the state identity which repudiates exclusive considerations of religious factors at the expense of pragmatic domestic interests and priorities. As the state continues to maintain its non-theocratic identity, any government in Indonesia is bound to face the same dilemma in foreign policy and is obliged to weigh its calculations in the formulation and the conduct of foreign policy within that dilemma. Moreover, in the end it is the state's domestic weaknesses that dictate regime interests and priorities.

As it was with Suharto's and Habibie's foreign policy, Indonesian foreign policy under President Wahid was also faced with similar constrains. In that context, it is important to note that the main concern of the Muslim community was to ensure that Indonesian foreign policy would not be contradictory and detrimental to Islamic interests. When President Wahid's attempt to establish direct trade ties with Israel was perceived to be detrimental to Islamic interests, the Muslim community launched a strong opposition to ensure that such a plan would not take place. The episode clearly demonstrates that the Islamic factor serves as a "control mechanism" rather than a primary motivating factor in Indonesian foreign policy

The dilemma of dual identity continues to leave its marks on Indonesian foreign policy in the post-Suharto era. President Wahid tended to resolve that dilemma by exercising a "balancing act" and "policy of equidistance." The intention to pay more attention to Arab–Islamic countries in the Middle East on the one hand and the plan to establish direct trade relations with Israel on the other serve as one clear example of such an attempt. That approach was closely linked to Wahid's preference to use foreign policy for domestic political purposes in which the restoration of domestic and international confidence, the process of economic recovery, and regime consolidation constituted the most important agenda. Consequently, official reference to Islam as a guiding principle in foreign policy continues to be absent.

Indeed, domestic imperatives continue to set the context for continuity in Indonesian foreign policy which emphasises a good and close relationship with the West. On the one hand, internal weaknesses exacerbated by the economic and political crisis required Indonesia to rely on the help from the IMF, the West, and the international community in general. In such circumstance, Wahid's government cannot afford to introduce a dramatic change in the course of Indonesian foreign policy. On the other hand, however, excessive dependence on external forces would give rise to domestic resentments. Consequently, Wahid's government is also forced to seek refuge in a fine line between form and substance in foreign policy as a way to cope with dilemma of dependence resulting from internal weaknesses. Indeed, President Wahid's foreign policy is also dictated by the need to resolve the double dilemmas, namely dilemma of dependence resulting from internal weaknesses at one end of the spectrum and dilemma of dual identity at the other.

Under President Megawati, the non-religious character of foreign policy is preserved and reinforced further. The extent to which Islamic considerations have played a role in the making of foreign policy remains subject to constraints posed and defined by the reality of domestic weakness and the dilemma of dual identity. While domestic weakness requires the government to use foreign policy as an instrument to foster good relations with the non-Islamic world for the sake of supporting domestic political and economic agendas and priorities, the growing significance of Islam in politics and policy-making can no longer be ignored altogether. In that context, a measure of Islam in foreign

policy has to be weighed in terms of the dual identity character of the state also. A foreign policy with a strong religious character would provide additional weight to the challenge posed by some Islamic groups to the dual identity of the Indonesian state.

Like the New Order, the Megawati government has also sought to accommodate the Islamic voices in foreign policy. That accommodation, as demonstrated in her government's response to September 11 and the subsequent American retaliation against Al-Qaeda and Afghanistan, was carefully crafted so that it would not harm the greater political and economic interests of the regime and the state. Confronted with the need to balance Islamic aspirations within the society on the one hand, and the reliance on the West to address domestic weakness on the other, President Megawati – like her predecessors – has also invoked a clear distinction between form and substance in the conduct of Indonesian foreign policy. The fact that the pressure from Muslim groups forced President Megawati to qualify Indonesian support to the American war on terrorism also suggests that Islam, as in the case of President Wahid's intention to establish diplomatic ties with Israel, still serves as a "control mechanism" on Indonesian foreign policy. When the pressure was at the same time not accommodated fully, it is also clear that there is a limit within which the influence of the Islamic factor in foreign policy can be expressed.

Notes

1 Introduction

1 Michael Leifer, *Dilemmas of Statehood in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Asia Pacific Press, 1972), p. 1.
2 Ahmad Syafii Maarif, "Kata Pengantar" (Forewords) in M. Rusli Karim, *Negara dan Peminggiran Islam Politik: Suatu Kajian Mengenai Implikasi Kebijakan Pembangunan Bagi Keberadaan "Islam Politik" di Indonesia Era 1970-an dan 1980-an* [The State and the Marginalisation of Political Islam: A Study on the Implications of Development for the Existence of "Political Islam" in Indonesia in 1970s and 1980s] (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1999), pp. ix-x.
3 See, for example, John Eposito, ed., *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics, and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Jochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg, eds., *The Next Threat: Western Perceptions of Islam* (London: Pluto Press, 1995); John L. Eposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Fawaz A. Gerges, *American and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); John L. Eposito and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); John L. Eposito, ed., *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997); Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, translated by Carol Volk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); John Kelsay, *Islam and War: The Gulf War and Beyond* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993); John L. Eposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Azzam Tamimi and John L. Eposito, eds., *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).
4 Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press/RAND, 1995), p. 2.
5 Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 2. Typical of this view, see, for example, Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilization," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3, 1993.
6 Judith Miller, "The Challenge of Radical Islam," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1993, p. 45.
7 A counter argument to this view from within the Western literature can be found in Fuller and Lesser, *A Sense of Siege*.
8 Karim, *Negara dan Peminggiran*, p. 19.
9 The debate on Indonesia's state identity prior to the independence is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

10 Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy Under Suharto: Aspiring to International Leadership* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1997), p. 160.
11 Riza Sihbudi, *Indonesia–Timur Tengah: Masalah dan Prospek* [Indonesia–Middle East: Problems and Prospect] (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1997), p. 13.
12 Michael Leifer, "The Islamic Factor in Indonesia's Foreign Policy: A Case of Functional Ambiguity," in Adeed Dawisha, ed., *Islam in Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 144.
13 Ibid.
14 The Preamble of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.
15 For the distinction between *abangan* and *santri* within Indonesia's Islamic community, see Clifford Geertz, The Religion of Java (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960).
16 See Suryadinata, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, pp. 14–15.
17 Michael Leifer, "The Peace Dividend: Israel's Changing Relationship with South-East Asia," Institute of Jewish Affairs, *Research Report*, no. 1, February 1994, pp. 3–4.
18 See, Suryadinata, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, p. 160 and Michael Leifer, "The Islamic Factor," p. 144.
19 R. William Liddle, "The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation," *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 55, no. 3 (August 1996), pp. 613–634.

2 Islam, politics, and the state in Indonesia

1 A comprehensive discussion on this difficulty is found in M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (London: Macmillan, 1981), Chapter 1.
2 Azyumardi Azra, *Renaisans Islam di Asia Tenggara: Sejarah Wacana dan Kekuasaan* [Islamic Renaissance in Southeast Asia: A History of Discourse and Power] (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1999), pp. 30–31.
3 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 7.
4 Azra, *Renaisans Islam*, p. 33.
5 Ibid., p. 31.
6 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 4.
7 Azra, *Renaisans Islam*, p. 32.
8 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 11.
9 Ibid.
10 G. W. J. Drewes, "New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia?" (1968) reprinted in Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique, and Yasmin Hussain, eds., *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1985), pp. 11–12.
11 Ibid., p. 13.
12 Like supporters of the theory of the Arab origin of Indonesian Islam, those who argued that Islam in Indonesia came from India also used Ibn Battuta's account of Shafi'i rulers in Samudra Pasai to support their theory. However, they argued that the Shafi'i influence on rulers of Samudra Pasai came from followers of the Shafi'i school of thought from Gujarat and Malabar in India, not from Arabia or Egypt.
13 M. C. Ricklefs, "Islamization in Java: Fourteenth to Eighteen Centuries," in Ibrahim, Siddique, and Hussain, eds., *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, p. 37.
14 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 7.
15 Azra, *Renaisans Islam*, p. 33.
16 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 7.
17 Ibid., p. 8.
18 Azra, *Renaisans Islam*, p. 34.

19 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 11.
20 Ricklefs, "Islamization in Java," p. 37.
21 Ibid.
22 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 12.
23 Simuh, *Sufisme Jawa: Transformasi Tasawuf Islam ke Mistik Jawa* [Javanese Sufiism: Transformation of Islamic Sufiism to Javanese Mysticism] (Jogyakarta: Bentang, 1995), p. 21.
24 Ricklefs, "Islamization in Java," p. 40.
25 On this point, see, among others, Marwati Djoned Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notosusanto, *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia* [Indonesia's National History], vol. III (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1992), pp. 26–27;
26 Ailsa Zainuddin, *A Short History of Indonesia* (Sydney: Cassel Australia, 1968), p. 93.
27 Ibid., p. 91.
28 Robert W. Hefner, "Religion: Evolving Pluralism," in Donald K. Emmerson, ed., *Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), p. 208.
29 Karkoko Kamajaya Partokusumo, *Kebudayaan Jawa: Perpaduannya Dengan Islam* [Javanese Culture: Its Integration with Islam] (Yogyakarta: IKAPI, 1995), p. 204.
30 Ibid., p. 205.
31 Wahyono S. Kusumoprojo, *Kepemimpinan Dalam Sejarah Bangsa Indonesia* [Leadership in Indonesia's History] (Jakarta: Yayasan Kejuangan Panglima Besar Sudirman, 1992), p. 19.
32 For brief explanations of this title, see Partokusumo, *Kebudayaan Jawa*, pp. 303–304 and David Joel Steinberg, ed., *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History*, revised edition (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), p. 84.
33 R. M. Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 53.
34 Musthafa Kamal Pasha and Ahmad Adaby Darban, *Muhammadiyah Sebagai Gerakan Islam Dalam Perspektif Historis dan Ideologis* [Muhammadiyah as an Islamic Movement in Historical and Ideological Perspectives], (Yogyakarta: LPPI, 2000), p. 53.
35 See, for example, Simuh, *Sufisme Jawa*.
36 Azra, *Renaisans Islam*, p. 35.
37 Ricklefs, "Islamization in Java," p. 37.
38 Ibid., p. 38.
39 A. H. Johns, "Islam in Southeast Asia: Problems of Perspective," reprinted in Ibrahim, Siddique and Hussain, *Readings on Islam*, p. 21.
40 Hefner, "Religion: Evolving Pluralism," p. 209.
41 Ibid., p. 210.
42 Steinberg, *In Search of Southeast Asia*, p. 301.
43 Ibid., p. 299.
44 Ibid.
45 Along with the Muhammadiyah, there was also Sarekat Islam (SI) organisation, also founded in 1912. Unlike Muhammadiyah, the SI saw its mission more in economic and political terms and within a decade ceased to be a powerful movement after Dutch suppression. Muhammadiyah, on the other hand, saw its mission more in terms of the wider social and religious interests of the Muslim community.
46 See Masykuri Abdillah, *Responses of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals to the*

Concept of Democracy (1966–1993) (Hamburg: Abera Verlag Meyer & Co, 1997), pp. 27–28.

47 Steinberg, *In Search of Southeast Asia*, p. 302.
48 Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behaviour of A Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989), pp. 186–187.
49 Steinberg, *In Search of Southeast Asia*, p. 301.
50 Allan A. Samson, "Conceptions of Politics, Power, and Ideology in Contemporary Islam," in Karl D. Jackson and Lucian Pye, eds., *Political Power and Communications in Indonesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 199.
51 Ibid., p. 219.
52 Ibid., p. 199.
53 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960). This categorisation has been widely used by many other scholars in their studies on Islam in Indonesia. Few use these concepts critically, while many dwell on them as if they are given and fixed.
54 Douglas Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 16.
55 Michael Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto: Order, Development and Pressure for Change* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 125.
56 Hefner, "Religion: Evolving Pluralism," p. 221.
57 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 174.
58 It is important to note that given the fact that the majority members and leaders of the *kebangsaan* group was comprised of Muslim individuals, differences between the two should be understood in terms of political and ideological contexts, not in terms of religious devotion. For example, it is difficult to say that key leaders within the *kebangsaan* group, such as Sukarno and Hatta, were less Islamic than their Muslim counterparts who advocated an Islamic state in Indonesia. For this important distinction, see Bahtiar Effendy, "Islam and the State: The Transformation of Islamic Political Ideas and Practices in Indonesia," Ph.D. Dissertation, the Ohio State University, 1994, p. 75.
59 Partai Sarekat Islam was the first Islamic party established in 1923 by modernist Islamic leaders. For a discussion on the origins and role of this party, see A. Timur Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam: Its Contribution to Indonesian Nationalism," MA Thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 1959.
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6 Islam and foreign policy after Suharto

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31 See Amien Rais's statement in *Bisnis Indonesia*, 6 October 1998.
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33 In a televised debate with Golkar's Chairman Akbar Tanjung, Amien pointed to Italy as a good example of how a government managed to eradicate the widespread practice of corruption. "Pro and Kon," *Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia* (TPI), 14 January 1998, 21.30–22.30 Indonesian Western Time.
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43 Quoted in *Kompas*, 20 July 1998. The English translation is by the author. See also *Merdeka*, 20 July 1998.
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46 *Jakarta Post*, 18 December 1998.
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48 Ibid.
49 *Suara Pembaruan*, 21 December 1998.
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51 Gusmardi Bustami is a member of ICMI. He was Chairman of the ICMI Chapter in the UK when he served as Indonesia's Trade Attaché in the early 1990s.
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53 The PKB was later split into two parties after Matori Abdul Djalil was dismissed as the party leader due to his support for Megawati in removing President Wahid from power in July 2001. He however still claims to be the chairman of PKB.
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55 Fahruddin Salim, "Anatomi Kekuatan-kekuatan Politik Islam" [An Anatomy of Islamic Political Forces], *Kompas*, 5 April 1999.

56 Ibid.

57 See, M. Alfan Alfian, "Eksprimentasi Islam Politik Jilid III" [The Experiment of Political Islam, Volume III] in Hamid Basyaib and Hamid Abidin, ed., *Mengapa Partai Islam Kalah?* [Why Did Islamic Political Parties Loose?] (Jakarta: Alvabet, 1999), pp. 116–120.

58 Ibid., p. 117. In the context of political alignment, however, it is extremely important to recognise the differences in the "informal" camp, namely between the modernist Islam (represented by PAN and PBB) on the one hand and the traditional Islam on the other (represented by PKB). As it became evident during the presidential election, modernist-based PAN opted to form a coalition with "formal" Islamic political parties, rather than with the secular-nationalist PDI-P. Meanwhile, the traditionalist-based PKB – which was initially close to forming a coalition with PDI-P – was forced to join the modernist-based coalition only after its leader was nominated as presidential candidate. The dynamic of coalition during the presidential election is discussed in the next section.

59 See, for example, Mochtar Naim, "Kekalahan Partai Politik Islam" [The Defeat of Islamic Political Parties], *Republika*, 13 July 1999; Sugiono, "Islam dan Politik di Indonesia" [Islam and Politics in Indonesia], *Jawa Pos*, 9 July 1999; Riza Sihbudi, "Kegagalan Islam Politik" [The Failure of Political Islam], *Forum Keadilan*, 4 July 1999; and Saiful Mujani, "Kekalahan Partai Islam" [The Defeat of Islamic Parties], *Gamma*, 27 June 1999. These articles can also be found in Basyaib and Abidin, ed., *Mengapa Partai Islam Kalah?*

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69 Siregar, "Apakah Politik Islam Kalah?"

70 Suharsono, *Cemerlangnya Poros Tengah* (The Success of Central Axis), (Jakarta: Perennial Press, 1999), p. 129 and also p. 152.

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73 Ibid., p. 36.

74 See statement by Chairman of PBB, *Forum Keadilan*, 15 August 1999.

75 Abd. Rohim Ghazali, "Gus Dur, Amien Rais, dan Masa Depan Reformasi" [Gus Dur, Amien Rais, and the Future of Reform] in Ghazali, ed., *Gus Dur Dalam Sorotan*, p. 68.

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77 See, for example, interview with Amien Rais in D&R, 26–31 June 1999 and *Forum Keadilan*, no. 18, 8 August 1999.

78 See Tempo, 8 August 1999. The breakdown of support is as shown in Table 6.1:

Table 6.1 Results of the 1999 general elections

Megawati		*GusDur*		*Habibie*	
PDI-P	154	PPP	59	Golkar	120
PKP	6	PKB	51	TNI	38
PBTI	3	PAN	35	PDI	2
PDKB	3	PBB	13	IPKI	1
PNI-M	1	PK	6	PDR	1
PNI-FM	1	PKU	1	PP	1
		PSII	1		
		PNU	1		
Total	168		169		163

79 Suharsono, *Cemerlangnya Poros Tengah*, p. 129.
80 The *Fraksi Reformasi* consists of two political parties, PAN and PK, who coalesced to form a fraction within the MPR.
81 *Kompas*, 21 October 1999.
82 See statement by Foreign Minister Alwi Shihab, *Media Indonesia*, 3 November 1999.
83 *Kompas*, 27 October 1999.
84 Interview, SCTV, Jakarta, 1 March 2000, at 19.00–19.30 Western Indonesian time.
85 Ibid.
86 See interview with Director of Information, Indonesia's Foreign Ministry, in *Panji Masyarakat*, no. 31, 17 November 1999, p. 30.
87 *Jakarta Post*, 5 November 1999.
88 *Media Indonesia*, 3 November 1999.
89 *Jakarta Post*, 27 October 1999.
90 Due to its significance in the context of the relationship between Islam and foreign policy, this issue will be discussed in detail in the next section.
91 For a discussion on how this aspiration was manifested during Sukarno's and Suharto's periods, see Rizal Sukma, "The Evolution of Indonesia's Foreign Policy," *Asian Survey*, vol. 35, no. 3 (March 1995) and "Indonesia's *Bebas-Aktif* Foreign Policy and the 'Security Agreement' with Australia," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 51, no. 2 (July 1997).
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106 *Kompas*, 26 October 1999.
107 *Kompas*, 1 December 1999.
108 Ben Perkasa Drajat, "Diplomasi Luar Negeri Gus Dur" [Gus Dur's External Diplomacy], *Kompas*, 11 February 2000.
109 For a discussion on the volatile nature of the Sino–Indonesian relationship, see Rizal Sukma, "Recent Development in Indonesia–China Relations," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 16, no. 1 (June 1994), pp. 35–45.
110 *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 19 November 1999.
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112 CGI is an international consortium formed under the aegis of the World Bank to provide loans for Indonesia. The majority of its members are Western countries.
113 See Rizal Sukma and Tubagus Feridhanusetyawan, *The Future of Political and Economic Reforms in Indonesia*, a study prepared for Fujitsu Research Institute (FRI), Tokyo, Japan (CSIS: Jakarta, March 2000), p. 55.
114 *Jakarta Post*, 27 October 1999.
115 *FEER*, 13 April 2000, p. 69.
116 *Straits Times*, 5 April 2000.
117 *FEER*, 13 April 2000, p. 69.
118 Nasir Tamara, "Politik Luar Negeri Baru" [New Foreign Policy], *Republika*, 8 November 1999.
119 Abubakar E. Hara, "Arah Politik Luar Negeri Gus Dur" [Gus Dur's Foreign Policy Direction], *Republika*, 4 November 1999.
120 Drajat, "Skenario Diplomasi Presiden."
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122 *Media Indonesia*, 3 November 1999.
123 *Kompas*, 6 December 1999.
124 *Kompas*, 19 November 1999.
125 See *Suara Pembaruan*, 24 November 1999 and *Bisnis Indonesia*, 24 November 1999.
126 Aceh is a province where Islam has taken very strong root in the society. In this context, the Acehnese Independence Movement (GAM) has partly based its struggle against the Indonesian government on a religious basis. There have been reports that members of GAM received military training from Libya, and the Indonesian government is worried that their cause for independence might receive sympathy from Middle East countries.
127 See *Jakarta Post*, 23 November 1999, *Media Indonesia*, 23 November 1999, and *Suara Karya*, 24 November 1999.
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129 *Republika*, 25 November 1999.
130 Ibid.
131 *Jakarta Post*, 20 November 1999.
132 *Merdeka*, 23 November 1999.
133 Ibid.

134 *Republika*, 24 November 1999.
135 Ibid.
136 *Merdeka*, 1 November 1999.
137 *Republika*, 1 December 1999.
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142 *Suara Karya*, 26 November 1999.
143 *Tajuk*, no. 19, 11 November 1999.
144 *Jakarta Post*, 27 October 1999.
145 *Tajuk*, no. 19, 11 November 1999.
146 *Al-fiqh* means an attempt to make judgements consistent with *shariah* or Islamic religious laws.
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149 *Republika*, 8 December 1999.
150 *Merdeka*, 3 November 1999.
151 *Jakarta Post*, 28 October 1999.
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153 The most comprehensive refutation is given by KISDI's press release on 12 November 1999. The text can be found in Husaini, ed., *Zionis Israel*, pp. 59–71. See also, Riza Sihbudi, "Controversy over Indonesia–Israel Relations," *Jakarta Post*, 19 November 1999.
154 *Republika*, 4 November 1999.
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158 *Jakarta Post*, 13 November 1999.
159 Ibid.
160 *Jakarta Post*, 15 November 1999.
161 Ibid.
162 *Jakarta Post*, 19 November 1999.
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164 *Suara Pembaruan*, 3 November 1999.
165 *Merdeka*, 1 November 1999.
166 *Republika*, 2 November 1999.
167 Sihbudi, "Controversy over Indonesia–Israel Relations."
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170 At this point, it should be cautioned that the Wahid government has been in power only for six months at the time of writing. Therefore, the position of Islam in foreign policy might change in the future depending on the circumstances discussed in this section.
171 Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press/RAND, 1995), p. 109.
172 KISDI's Press Release, 14 November 1999, in Husaini, ed., *Zionis Israel*, p. 74. Italics added. This press release was a response to criticisms by Faisal Basri,

Secretary-General of PAN, who stated that the critics of the establishment of trade ties with Israel have practised double standards. He maintained that if the critics argued that ties with Israel should be opposed for it suppresses the Palestinian, then the critics should also demand that Indonesia sever diplomatic ties with Russia for oppressing Muslims in Chechnya.

173 It is impossible that Indonesian Muslim leaders are not aware of human rights violations against the Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang Province. For recent violations in the area, see the report in *FEER*, 13 April 2000, pp. 24–25.

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175 Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia*, p. 45.

176 Ibid., p. 49.

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7 Islam and foreign policy under Megawati

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5 *Tempo*, vol. 30, no. 36, 5–11 November 2001.

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7 For the debate on the question of *shariah* law in August 2000, especially the position of Muhammadiyah and the NU, see Kurniawan Zein and Sarifuddin HA, eds., *Syariat Islam Yes, Syariat Islam No* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001).
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9 For a survey of the Indonesian economy in 2001, see, CSIS, Department of Economics, "The Weakening Trend in Indonesia's Economic Growth," *Indonesian Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 1, First Quarter 2002.
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13 Ibid.
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