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THE REPOSITIONED INDONESIA



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WITH A FOREWORD BY
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THE REPOSITIONED INDONESIA

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Chapter 2

DE-RADICALIZING THE RADICALS

Dr. Muhammad Ali and Dr. Muhammad Wildan

Authorities may capture hundreds or thousands of hardliners, but it is their hearts and minds that matter most.

In the year 2000, all Indonesians were horrified by the series of bombings that suddenly occurred in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. Starting with an explosion at the Philippine ambassador's residence that severely injured the ambassador, blasts soon followed in many other locations in Jakarta. The entire nation became somewhat confused and chaotic, as law enforcement officers seemed helpless to identify and locate the perpetrators. Unlike extremist groups in the Middle East or elsewhere that publicly declared responsibility for the attacks

they carried out and the motives behind them, no single group dared to claim responsibility for the bombings in Indonesia. The situation was exacerbated by the religious conflicts in the Maluku region, where Christians (the Reds) and Muslims (the Whites) clashed from 1999 to 2002, leaving hundreds dead and thousands having disappeared. Never in modern times had Indonesia witnessed these kinds of calamities.

After several months, Indonesia finally realized that Jema'ah Islamiyah (JI) had masterminded most, if not all, of the bombings. It was not until the Bali Bombing in 2002 that Indonesian authorities organized a much more focused and systematic hunt for JI members. After this tragedy, the United Nations put JI on its list of terrorist groups, thereby obliging all UN member nations to freeze JI's assets and all financial flow to and from the organization. The world then dubbed JI—and rightly so—an al-Qaeda representative in Southeast Asia.

A year after the Bali bombing, the Indonesian Police established Special Detachment 88, which was specifically tasked with a crackdown on terrorism activities. The unit's efforts resulted in the arrest of many fundamentalist key players such as Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Nasir Abas, and Aman Abdulrahman; the killing of such high-profile figures as Dulmatin, Azahari, Noordin M. Top; the capture and execution of the Bali bombers Amrozi, Ali Ghufuron, and Imam Samudra; and the capture and execution of more than 500 terrorists.

Then, recognizing that a solely hard approach by security forces to quell violent extremism would not work for our nation, Indonesian authorities came up with the de-radicalization approach. During the first session of the Leader's Retreat G-20 Summit in Hamburg in July 2017, President Joko Widodo

expressed his confidence in it. Out of 560 terrorist inmates, only three of them, or 0.53%, refused to be de-radicalized. The concept has proven that military might and sophisticated weapons alone are unable to completely wipe out terrorism. Violent extremism deals mainly with minds and ideology, which is why Indonesia is more determined than ever to perfect its soft approach by further developing and refining its de-radicalization methods. Authorities may capture hundreds or thousands of hardliners, but it is their hearts and minds that matter most and must be systematically handled without delay. For de-radicalization specialists, winning hearts and minds is the real battleground.

De-radicalization should be done on various levels, not only directed at imprisoned terrorists. It must be applied in homes, organizations, the media, schools, and all strata of society. De-radicalization should be started as early as possible, since Indonesian youths may possess the seeds of fundamentalist thinking. One of the most effective ways to de-radicalize the radicals is to use the voices of ex-radicals and moderates. At the same time, we understand that Indonesian youths spend a number of hours in schools, so it is vital to look into schools, as they are good places to educate youths but can also be ideal places to breed extremism. We cannot stress enough the importance of schools, including universities, in shaping grassroots ways of thinking.

Knowing how important education is for countering terrorism, the Indonesian Consulate in San Francisco tried to bring this concern to US universities through a series of seminars in 2016; these included Portland State University and the University of Washington. Following are some thoughts

raised by Indonesian professors about violent extremism in Indonesia; I summarized their talks and materials, and we are pleased to share them with you.

“De-radicalization and Disengagement in Indonesia”

– Dr. Muhammad Ali

De-radicalization can be interpreted as any effort to change or redirect views that are supportive of violent action generated from ideological principles; while disengagement is a decision by individual members of a terror group, radical movement, or gang to cease participation in acts of violence and focus more on behavior. So if de-radicalization tries to handle the realms of ideology, mindset, idea, and viewpoint, disengagement takes responsibility for how to stop actions of violence.

In 2008, some de-radicalization programs were introduced in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Indonesia, Egypt, Malaysia, Singapore, and Morocco. History shows that these programs might comprise ideological, behavioral, and organizational levels. Tobias Metzger’s matrix on fundamentalism and violence relations notes that de-radicalization is considered to have high fundamentalism, which may cause low or high violent reprises; disengagement is regarded as low and high fundamentalism, but can result in a high possibility of violence; and counter-radicalization, which has low fundamentalism, and may bring about low and high violence.

Indonesia has Pancasila as its sole ideology, the 1945 Constitution as a legal basis, and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, or Unity in Diversity as the nation’s symbol. The Unitary State of

the Republic of Indonesia is kind of in-between a secular state and a religious state. It is the third largest democracy in the world after India and the U.S., and is predominantly Muslim (87% of its more than 250 million people), yet the country is a pluralistic rather than an Islamic state.

In contemporary Indonesian Islam there have been some new terms indicating that Islam and Indonesia may go hand in hand, such as *Islam Nusantara* (Archipelagic Islam), *Islam Berkemajuan* (Advanced Islam), and *Islam Indonesia*. I believe there are presently three ideological polarization or groups in Indonesia: Conservative, Moderate, and Liberal. Present-day Islam can now commonly be discussed in religious and public discourses that are done in peaceful, nonviolent ways.

Origins of radicalism in Indonesia can be traced from the anti-colonial movements that started in the Darul Islam Movements in the 1950s, followed by the political openness of 1998 that originated Jema'ah Islamiyah, *Front Pembela Islam* (Islamic Defender Front), *Hizbur Tahrir* (eventually banned by Indonesian Government in 2017), and other, similar groups. Basically, the ideology addresses crises by returning to the pristine past, the timelessness of Shari'a law, and skepticism toward or rejection of democracy, which is often considered the enemy of Islam. These groups justify the use of violence (vigilante, paramilitary, terrorist) directed against outsiders and dehumanization, resulting in brutal violence, mostly by men and youngsters. The groups exhibit similar patterns such as good and charismatic leadership that enables them to recruit and persuade young people to become members.

The managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*, Jonathan Tepperman, who in September 2016 published *The Fix: How Nations Survive*

and Thrive in A World in Decline, believes that Indonesia “has come close to effectively eliminating the threat of extremist violence.”¹ He offered an explanation based on Indonesia’s success stories in countering terrorism in his third chapter, “Kill Them with Kindness: How Indonesia Crushed and Co-opted Its Islamic Extremists.” He argues that Indonesia supports democracy and pluralism, and that the government is no longer repressive, resulting in a politically stable nation. The administration wisely adopts parts of the Islamists’ political agenda, which has brought Islamic political party figures into government. In the interest of security, Indonesia created Detachment 88, a counterterrorism unit that goes after the terrorists hard, but not *too hard* because repression only breeds more extremism.

I question whether radicalism and extremist thought in Indonesia really arises from within, because I suspect that the negative influence actually comes from false and hard-line teachings from outside the country.

The Indonesian government continues to hold religious discussions on many critical issues, including the meanings of jihad, with the detained militants, whom police officers regard as “friends” and talk with them of such matters as how they will get jobs after being released, and whether they want their children to attain proper education. Additionally, the government provides economic incentives until those who have been released get financially established.

One government institution that is responsible for coordinating the counterterrorism programs of various agencies in Indonesia is the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT, *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme*), which

was established in 2010. It is tasked to work with other social elements, hold workshops and seminars, offer one-to-one counseling to disengage militants from their commitment to violence (though not necessarily change their ideology), and involve ex-militants to persuade their fellow extremists to pursue their ideology through peaceful means instead of bombings and killings.

Muslim civil societies that represent the majority of Indonesian Muslims also take part in the de-radicalization process. *Nahdatul Ulama* (Awakening of Religious Scholars) promotes Islam Nusantara, which is tolerant, moderate, and balanced. The organization focuses on numerous Islamic schools (*pesantren*), preachings, publications, social works, and economic empowerment through *zakat* (alms-giving) and entrepreneurship. Nahdatul Ulama even has a wing, *Anshor*, or *Banser Densus 99*, tasked to defend the state.

Another influential Islamic organization in Indonesia, *Muhammadiyah*, is also dedicated to supporting the antiviolence movement; it encourages interfaith dialogues; Sunni-Shia dialogues; *Islam Berkemajuan* (advanced Islam); family education; avoidance of literal, partial, and extreme religious interpretations; and has continually campaigned that terrorism is a common enemy of humankind.

Another is The Wahid Institute, which aims to seed pluralism and peaceful Islam through activities from online initiatives that promote tolerance in social media to encouraging young Muslim thinkers. The institute works with former terrorists and youths; it advises them to repent and appreciate peace, teaches them not to sympathize with ISIS, and shows them how to transform counter-narrative into cultural identity so

they are proud to be Muslims who are tolerant and moderate, and how they can be Muslims yet true, modern Indonesians at the same time.

Having the right literature in schools also contributes to learning how to de-radicalize radicalization in Indonesia. Some books encouraging pluralism and tolerance that are taught in schools are *Islam & Multikulturalisme*,² *Khutbah-Khutbah Toleransi*,³ and *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman Al-Qur'an dan Hadis*.⁴ Challenges to scholastic education come in the reinterpretation of some difficult verses, like *Jihad fi sabililla, qital, harb; Kafir; Thogut; Wilayat, Auliya; and Wa lan tardha*. All should principally be described as unity of God and unity of mankind, diversity of languages and races, and to know one another.

Another effective de-radicalization educational tool for how to avoid being a radical and extremist is showing and discussing *Jihad Selfie*, a documentary film produced by Noor Hoda Ismail. The film tells the story of an intelligent Indonesian teenager from Aceh (the only Indonesian province that applies Islamic Law) who studied in Turkey, and through social media meets with friends heavily influenced by ISIS. *Jihad Selfie* shows how this sort of recruitment through social media can go. The teen, however, decides to go home to his parents in Aceh.

There are various identified factors for radicalization; some are extreme religious education, lack of financial security, a boring life, feeling disconnected from family, having access to extreme online sites, and media including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. In many cases it is found that the seeds of radicalism actually come from family and education in school. Another difficulty for Indonesia is that law enforcers cannot detain

someone simply because he has radical thoughts. As long as he commits no violence or crimes against the law, there is not much the authorities can do.

A research project by Julie Chernov Hwang, Rizal Panggabean, and Ihsan Ali Fauzi describes the extent to which Indonesian jihadists are disengaged from violence. The trio's fieldwork in Jakarta and Central Sulawesi's prisons, including interviews with twenty-three former Poso-based jihadists, revealed that emotional, psychological, rational, and relational factors can lead militants to turn away from terror tactics.⁵

There are five drivers of disengagement: First is the development of new relationships with individuals outside the jihadi circle, where they receive other influences and interests from "regular" individuals. The second is pressure from parents, spouses, and/or other family members, as familyhood remains a very strong value in Indonesian tradition. The third is when they conclude their own cost-benefit analysis, and the fourth is disillusionment with the movement's leaders and tactics. The last driver is change in their personal and professional priorities. Government programs must be directed to address these tendencies if the country wishes to see better outcomes of disengagement.

Indonesia must continue to modify its long-term programs on counterterrorism, de-radicalization, and disengagement, and should concentrate on a human treatment approach, which is based on well-conceived programs, including reintegrating the ex-jihadists with the larger community. The government needs to enlarge partnerships with more actors: state and civil society; national, local, and international institutions; and religious and nonreligious societies. Some NGOs that can be

positively considered are the Institute for Policy Analysis of conflict (IPAC), *Pusat Kajian Terorisme dan Deradikalisasi* (PAKAR), *Aliansi Indonesia Damai* (AIDA), and *Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian* (YPP).

Another encouraging development is the agreement between the governments of Indonesia and United States to establish the Indonesia-U.S. Council on Religion and Pluralism (CRP) in 2016. The council defined and adopted three priority areas of work: 1) increasing religious understanding, mutual respect and collaboration; 2) identifying and fostering positive civic and religious education models that promote analytical thinking and respect; and 3) empowering civil society to deter violent extremism.⁶

Indonesia and the United States have some interesting areas of comparison:

- Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country, Pancasila is its ideology (not *Al-Quran* or *Hadis*), and it has a Ministry of Religion to manage the diverse faiths. The U.S. is a secular state with a Christian majority, but is more pluralistic, including atheism, than Indonesia.
- Indonesia has fewer Islamophobia issues, while the U.S. has issues of Islamophobia, radicals, and immigration.
- Disengagement in the U.S. has been exercised by Homeland Security, the State Department, and Islamic organizations (CAIR, MPAC, Cordova, etc.).

- Making Islam American and Islam Indonesian as common responses to transnational political loyalties and potential threats to democracy.

The session concluded with statements on the importance of finding common ground and mutual understanding, and setting standards for how to assess the success or failure of Indonesia's disengagement and de-radicalization programs. A single instance cannot determine that such programs are successful, so tangible indicators are needed. It is assumed that the disengagement is caused by specific individuals' initial motivations for becoming radicals and terrorists, their grievances, and their pathways out of the group. Ideology is not the only driving force for these extremists; other determining factors are as important and often more so: economic and financial problems, the individual's social network, a lack of right education, personal preferences, individual psychology, etc. Indonesia also needs collaborative research-based programs to address the issues of de-radicalization and disengagement.

Managing Challenges on the Spread of Radicalism Teachings in Indonesia Through Education – Dr. Muhammad Wildan

Although the majority of Indonesian people, about 87%, are Muslims, the Indonesian state was formed not as a theocratic one but based on humanitarian and religious values. In June 1945, the Committee of Nine agreed on the Jakarta Charter, which ultimately became the preamble to the country's constitution. In August 1945, Pancasila was officially set as a common platform of all ethnicities, religions, and cultures.

To organize different religions, the Indonesian government established the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Some groups of people were disappointed with the 1945 constitution because it did not accommodate Islam; hence they established Darul Islam. From 1950 to 1965, there was endless debate on the constitution and on Pancasila as the state's ideology.

In 1998, after thirty-two years of authoritarian government, Indonesia went through a difficult reformation era, initiated by university students, and thereafter became a democratic country. This was a great political opportunity, as it offered many chances for the general population to take part in reshaping the nation-state. Many of the people wished to do so, including Indonesian fighters in Afghanistan. On their return home, they were hunted down by Indonesia's totalitarian regime before 1998, but finally had the opportunity to voice their goals and struggle to make Indonesia an Islamic state. One organization, Jema'ah Islamiyah (JI), would not compromise to achieve its objectives; inspired by the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001 in New York City, they made Indonesia their battleground, resulting in a number of conflicts in several parts of Indonesia.

It is ironic that after the dawn of the Indonesian democracy era, post-1998, Indonesia witnessed an increase in violence, radicalism, and terrorism. It began with religious conflicts in Ambon and Poso, the bombings of churches in Jakarta in 2000, and Bali Bombing I in 2002, which took 202 lives—the largest number in the history of Indonesian terrorism. Additional incidents occurred until 2011, but then ceased for five years, until 2016, when the Sarinah bombings in Jakarta took place, claiming eight innocent lives.

Tracing the roots of radicalism in Indonesia, we find Darul

Islam (DI), established in 1949, and Jema'ah Islamiyah (JI), established in 1993. It took a while for the authorities to finally learn that JI was behind all the bombings. JI cannot be separated from Pesantren (Islamic school) Ngruki and all of its branches, which later became well known as the Ngruki Networks. In fact, Pesantren Ngruki had been used by several of its teachers to broaden the JI networks. The authorities eventually discovered that some Ngruki graduates were involved in several devastating bombings: two carried out Bali Bombing I in 2002; six bombed the J.W. Marriott in 2003; five committed the Mega Kuningan bombing in 2014, and two aided in Bali Bombing II in 2005. The authorities also found that several terrorists involved in Mega Kuningan had graduated from other pesantren within the Ngruki Networks. However, more recent acts of violent extremism related to ISIS are not rooted only in the three pesantrens, or *madrasahs*, but have much wider origins.

One of the biggest questions is: what had made them more extreme?

According to Oliver Roy, radicalism is a global phenomenon but is shaped by local peculiarities. In Indonesia, these are caused mainly by poverty, inappropriate education, false teachings, hate speech, and social-media misinformation that might intrigue seeds of radicalism in Indonesia. Second is the propaganda spread by Osama bin Laden, exhorting Muslims to destroy Western hegemony in Muslim countries and encouraging all Muslims to unite and wage global jihad against America and its allies. This contributed to the occurrence of violent extremism all over Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. Next, statements by Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi of ISIS on Khilafah (the caliphate) have brought many sympathizers worldwide. Fourth, the return

of many Indonesian fighters from Afghanistan was among the initial problematic concerns Indonesia faced. Fifth is wrong textual religious interpretation, such as is widely spread by Wahhabi-Salafism. Lastly is the vulnerability of the young, who are easily exposed to radicalism values, especially those youths who study in certain pesantren or madrasah boarding schools.

Pesantrens are vulnerable because they are mostly exclusive and isolated, have very limited resources of learning, and are subject only to low monitoring from local authorities. Pesantrens teach mostly *ustadz*-centric religious interpretation, and unfortunately, the *ustadz* (Islamic cleric) often has a relatively low-level education. The government also neglects most hardline pesantrens, so it needs to design and institute effective ways to penetrate and influence more of these.

Universities are very important places for youths to grow intellectually, emotionally, and academically. In this stage, learners can lean far “right” or far “left.” Those who promote moderate Islam need to realize that they must consider universities a vital arena. In Indonesia, the State Islamic Universities (UIN) and other lower-level, state-funded institutions of Islamic higher education like IAIN and STAIN, which are well known as the locomotives of moderate and progressive Islam. Many scholars have graduated from these universities and played significant roles in various national sectors like education, politics, religion, etc. Since early 2003, many study programs and centers in universities, like UIN Jakarta’s Center of Islamic and Society Research (PPIM), the Center for the Study of Islam and Social Transformation (CISForm) at UIN Yogyakarta, the Center for the Study and Promotion of Peace of Duta Wacana Christian University

(UKDW), Yogyakarta, and the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), Yogyakarta, have formulated some strategies to counter intolerance and radicalism. Numerous research projects, action research, and conferences have dealt with the issues. Some national and international institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education, the National Counter-Terrorism Agency, the US Embassy, the Australian Embassy, and the EU have helped to counter violent extremism.



Dr. Muhammad Wildan discusses de-radicalizing the radicals in Indonesia.

CISForm, for instance, has endeavored to determine how to mainstream moderate Islam among the grassroots people in Yogyakarta and Central Java. Since 2010, the center has tried to counter extremism and radical ideology in some pesantrens and among the young by disseminating information about and teaching moderate Islam, and by organizing workshops

on various sectors. They have developed libraries at eleven pesantrens, increased the Active Learning capacity of 150 ustadz, increased the leadership skills of one hundred ustadz, held workshops on social advocacy for ustadz and vigilante groups, and published enlightening comic books to counter the ISIS ideological narrative on the ground.

From historic and cultural perspectives, Indonesia has been home to a plural and tolerant society in which Islam has been considered a cultural identity. Since there has been no religious radicalism and extremism, the phenomenon is considered part of democratization in Indonesia, under which everyone is entitled to speak his or her mind, and no organizations or media have been banned after 1998. Here, the government should adopt a more comprehensive approach to addressing radicalism, and should not depend solely on Detachment 88 and BNPT, which could trigger another kind of radicalism. Besides de-radicalization methodologies, the government must enact laws to reduce the incidence of hate speech, which can lead to more serious extremisms.

Due to a significant number of terrorist attacks and subsequent arrests, people have begun to question whether Indonesian Islam and democracy can really go together. I strongly believe that Islamic political parties in Indonesia nowadays tend toward the center rather than to be more rightist, and the government is embracing them and inclusive of their political ideas. If Islamic political parties never have a majority of seats and votes in our central parliament, it will be because of democratic process and the decisions of the voting public, not the government's. The future of Indonesian politics is Post-Islamism, i.e., the combination of Islamism and democracy.

I hold the view that Indonesia remains a good model for the coexistence of Islam and democracy.

I wish to emphasize that radicalism in Indonesia, including ISIS-philosophies, has only a tiny number of Muslim adherents; it is decreasing significantly at present, and will continue to decrease along with the growth of global order and good Indonesian governance. Pancasila is still seen as a very solid common platform for the diverse Indonesia; moreover the government has courageously announced that it will disallow organizations that do not make Pancasila their basis.

Post-Islamism is steadily growing in Indonesia; the majority of Indonesians still appreciate and desire democracy and its values while at the same time maintaining their religious principles. If the government can consistently advocate democracy, enforce law, and maintain peace and security, I am confident that Indonesians will not adopt Islamism and radicalism. Lastly, I share the view of Asef Bayat that the future of democracy in the Muslim world is not determined by the issue of Islam's compatibility with democracy but by the capacity of Muslims to run democracy.⁷

Notes

1. *The Fix: How Nations Survive and Thrive in A World in Decline*, by Jonathan Tepperman, Tim Duggan Books, September 2016.
2. *Modul Islam & Multikulturalisme* or "Module of Islam and Multiculturalism," by Syafiq Hasyim, Ihsan Ali-Fauzi, Dadi Darmadi and Edited by Ahmad Manromi, published by ICIP in 2008.
3. *Khutbah-Khutbah Toleransi*, or "Preaching of Tolerance," a book published by MMS containing collected preaching from Indonesian

religious leaders that emphasize tolerance.

4. *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman Al-Qur'an & Hadis*, or “De-radicalization based on Al-Qur'an and Hadis Understanding,” by Nassarudin Umar, published by Elex Media Komputindo, June 9, 2014.

5. “The Disengagement of Jihadis in Poso, Indonesia,” by Julie Chernov Hwang, Rizal Panggabean, and Ihsan Ali Fauzi, published in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 53 No. 4, July/August 2013, pp. 754–777.

6. Jointly organized by Indonesian Foreign Affairs Ministry, USINDO (U.S-Indonesia Society), and U.S State Department, CRP had “Founding and Roadmap Conference of the Indonesian-U.S Council of Religion and Pluralism” in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on August 10–11, 2016. The event also appointed The Wahid Institute’s Executive Director, Yenny Wahid, and Founding President of Bayan Claremont Islamic Graduate School, Imam Jihad Turk, as co-chairs of CRP.

7. “Islam and Democracy: What is the Real Question?” Asef Bayat, Amsterdam University Press, 2007.