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Changing the Image of Islam and Muslim World: Indonesian Exercises

Abstraksi: *Indonesia adalah negara-bangsa multi religius. Hampir semua paham agama-agama besar dunia (Islam, Kristen, Katolik, Hindu dan Budha) hidup dan berkembang di negeri ini. Meskipun umat Islam merupakan kelompok terbesar dari populasi nasional (sekitar 87 %), sikap terbuka dan toleran mereka terhadap kelompok-kelompok agama yang lain terasa sangat menonjol. Hal itu bukan saja terbukti dalam harmonisnya hubungan antar-umat beragama selama ini, tetapi juga dalam sikap para pemimpin Muslim yang, semenjak perumusan konstitusi kenegaraan di masa-masa pergolakan kemerdekaan 1945, merelakan Republik Indonesia berdiri tanpa mencantumkan secara formal Islam sebagai dasar negara.*

Tulisan ini, yang semula merupakan teks ceramah umum Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia, H. Tarmizi Taber, M.D., di Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, U.S.A., pada 8 Nopember 1995, mendiskusikan wacana keagamaan umat Islam Indonesia dalam kaitannya dengan hubungan antar-umat beragama.

Tinjauan historis secara sepintas tentang akar-akar tradisi Islam di Asia Tenggara, membawa kita kepada wawasan yang mendalam atas dinamika kehidupan agama kawasan ini yang menjunjung tinggi nilai-nilai keterbukaan, toleransi dan moderasi. Kenyataan bahwa kawasan Asia Tenggara bukanlah merupakan pusat dari paham keagamaan manapun, dan bahwa agama-agama tersebut menyebar secara damai, telah menciptakan suatu kondisi kawasan masyarakat di mana komunitas-komunitas agama di Asia Tenggara memiliki banyak pengalaman dalam hal pluralitas kehidupan. Secara historis, komunitas agama di Asia Tenggara relatif hidup dalam kelompok-kelompok yang heterogen menyatu dengan komunitas agama lain. Akibatnya, keharusan untuk saling bersikap terbuka dan toleran satu komunitas agama dengan yang lain bukanlah suatu masalah.

Komunitas Muslim tak terkecuali. Di kawasan ini, citra Islam yang terbuka dan toleran benar-benar telah menghiasi berbagai wacana politik dan kebudayaan kawasan Asia Tenggara. Umat Islam di kawasan ini, untuk menyebut beberapa contoh, terbukti tampil lebih terpelajar, menikmati kehidupan ekonomi yang lebih baik, lebih mampu menyesuaikan diri dengan modernitas, dan, tentu saja, lebih siap menerima berbagai bentuk perubahan

an sosial. Sentimen anti-Barat tidak begitu berkembang di kawasan ini, kecuali dalam isu-isu solidaritas yang bersifat temporal seperti perang saudara di Bosnia. Dengan demikian, agama Islam dan komunitas Muslim Asia Tenggara telah berkembang menjadi suatu tradisi keagamaan yang relatif berbeda dari tradisi Islam yang terdapat di kawasan Dunia Islam umumnya seperti Timur Tengah, Afrika Utara, Balkan ataupun Indo-Pakistan.

Sebagai bagian penting dari komunitas Islam di Asia Tenggara, umat Islam Indonesia juga menunjukkan banyak persamaan. Komunitas Muslim Indonesia terbukti telah mampu menerima pluralitas keagamaan. Dalam konteks sosial-politik, pluralitas keagamaan dan toleransi tersebut jelas memiliki legitimasi ideologis dan kultural. Dipilihnya Pancasila (bukan Islam) sebagai dasar negara, dan ditetapkannya Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 (bukan *Syari'ah*) sebagai konstitusi nasional Indonesia, merupakan titik tolak yang kokoh untuk dapat ditumbuhkan menjadi sistem kehidupan yang pluralistik bagi komunitas agama-agama. Landasan lain yang juga turut memperkokoh sikap toleran dan terbuka itu adalah kesediaan semua komunitas agama di Indonesia untuk bersama-sama menghadap tantangan bangsa yang lebih riil seperti kemiskinan, kebodohan, keterbelakangan dan demokrasi.

Pancasila, dengan sendirinya merupakan suatu upaya politik-kebudayaan umat beragama di Indonesia untuk menciptakan semacam kesatuan paham dalam rangka mencari format suatu sistem politik yang tidak bersendikan doktrin agama (Islam) tertentu. Tapi, pada saat yang sama, ia juga mengakui otoritas dan institusi keagamaan sebagai bagian penting dari penyelenggaraan negara. Dengan demikian, dapat diasumsikan bahwa meskipun Indonesia bukanlah negara teokratis, ia juga bukan negara sekular yang mengenal pemisahan tegas antara persoalan politik dan agama. Hal ini terbukti dengan kenyataan bahwa pemerintah Indonesia menaruh perhatian besar terhadap kehidupan dan kegiatan keagamaan; bukan saja untuk Islam, tetapi juga untuk seluruh agama yang hidup di Indonesia.

Lebih dari itu, Pancasila juga menjadi inspirasi penting dalam mengembangkan sikap dialogis antar umat beragama. Hal itu terutama disebabkan kenyataan bahwa Pancasila merupakan acuan nilai yang dapat diresapi dan diamalkan oleh bangsa Indonesia tanpa mengenal batas-batas agama. Berdasarkan pada pemikiran ini, Islam Indonesia bisa menjadi contoh yang baik bagi pemecahan masalah toleransi antar agama dalam sebuah negara modern. Meskipun Islam merupakan ajaran agama yang paling besar dianut oleh penduduk, komunitas Muslim di negara ini telah berhasil merumuskan suatu "pandangan bersama" yang dapat mengakomodasi kepentingan seluruh masyarakat.

تغيير الرؤية نحو الإسلام ودنيا المسلمين (تجربة إندونيسيا)

الخلاصة: إندونيسيا دولة شعب ذى عدة أديان، كادت أن تكون كل المفاهيم الدينية حاضرة فيها (الإسلام والمسيحية والكاثوليك والهندوكية والبوذية) عائشة ومتطورة فى هذه البلاد. رغم أن الأمة الإسلامية تمثل الكتلة الغالبية من القاطنين المواطنين (حوالى ٨٧٪) ولكن مخطتهم المفتوحة وسماحتهم إزاء الجماعات الدينية الأخرى بارزتان وظاهرتان. هذه الحالة لم تدل انسجام الصلات بين الأمم المختلفة الأديان طيلة هذه المدة فحسب، ولكن كذلك فى خطة الزعماء الإسلاميين الذين -منذ تكوين دستور الدولة فى فترة الثورة التحريرية سنة ١٩٤٥- قد رضوا قيام الجمهورية الإندونيسية دون التسجيل رسميا بأن الإسلام أساس الدولة .

هذه المقالة التى فى البداية كانت نسخة محاضرة عامة وزير الشؤون الدينية الإندونيسية الحاج ترميذى طاهر (Tarmizi Taher) فى مركز لدراسة الأديان العالمية بجامعة هارفرد فى الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية فى ٨ نوفمبر ١٩٩٥، محتوية على مناقشة دينية شاملة الأمة الإسلامية الإندونيسية فى علاقتها بالأمم الدينية الأخرى.

إن الرؤية التاريخية الخاطفة بالنسبة لجذور التقاليد الإسلامية فى جنوب شرق آسيا تعطينا مجالاً عميقاً فيما يخص بنشاط الحياة الدينية فى هذه المنطقة التى ترفع عالياً القيم الانفتاحية والسماحة والتواضع وإظهار أن منطقة جنوب شرق آسيا ليست بمركز أحد المفاهيم الدينية أياً كانت، وإن تلك الأديان كلها منتشرة فى

سلام قد خلقت وضعا لمنطقة بيئية فيها الجاليات الدينية فى جنوب شرق آسيا تملك تجارب فى مسائل تعددية الحياة. وتاريخيا فإن الجاليات الدينية فى جنوب شرق آسيا تعيش نسبيا متنوعه المشارب فى وحدة مع جاليات دينية متغايرة، ونتيجة ذلك ضرورة اتخاذ كل سلوكا مفتوحا وتسامحا بين جاليات دينية واحدة وأخرى لا يكونان مسألة ماء، فالجاليات الإسلامية دون استثناء فى هذه البقعة بسماها الإسلامى المنشرح والسماحة التى ظهرت حقيقة مزينة بمختلف المظاهر السياسية والثقافية فى هذه المنطقة الجنوبية الشرقية لآسيا. إن الأمة الإسلامية فى هذه البقعة -لذكر بعض الأمثلة الحية فحسب- قد تبرهنت بأكثر وجودها الثقافى، متنعمة بأكثر قدرة فى الناحية الاقتصادية العالية، وأقرب ظهورا فى ملائمتها للحضارة الحديثة فى التجديد العالمى الشامل، ولا شك أنها أوفر استعدادا لتقبل الأنواع المختلفة من التغييرات الاجتماعية.

والشعور بمعادة الغرب ليس ناميا فى هذه الولاية إلا فى مسائل التضامن الأخوى الودى المؤقت والطارئ مثل الحرب الأهلية فى بوسنة. وبذلك فالدين الإسلامى والجالية الإسلامية فى جنوب شرق آسيا قد تطور وأصبح تقليدا دينيا الذى -فى أكثر جوانبه- يختلف عن التقليد الإسلامى الكائن فى مناطق العالم الإسلامى على وجه العموم مثل الشرق الأوسط وأفريقيا الشمالية والبلقان أو الهند والباكستان مثلا.

وكجزء هام من الجالية الإسلامية فى جنوب شرق آسيا، فالأمة الإسلامية الإندونيسية تشير كذلك على كثير من التشابه والتوافق، إذ ظهر أن مسلمى إندونيسيا قد استطاعوا قبول التعددية الدينية. وفى المجال السياسى الاجتماعى أن التعددية الدينية والسماحة المذكورة قد ظهرت بملكيتها شرعية الإيديولوجية والثقافة باختيارها المبادئ الخمسة (ليست بالإسلام) كأساس الدولة، وقرار الاحتكام بدستور سنة ١٩٤٥ (وليس بالشرعية الإسلامية) كدستور وطنى

إندونيسى. وهذا يعتبر نقطة الانطلاق القوية التى يمكن أنماؤها كنظام الحياة المتعدد للجاليات الدينية، والقواعد الأخرى التابعة لتقوية خطة السماح والانفتاحية تلك هى استعداد كل الجاليات الدينية فى إندونيسيا لمواجهة التحديات الشعبية الأكثر فعالية مثل الفقر والجهل والتخلف والديمقراطية. كل هؤلاء يدفع إلى خلق وجه الإسلام والجاليات الإسلامية الإندونيسية الأكثر سلاماً وأماناً.

المبادئ الخمسة -أساس الحياة الدولية المبنية على الألوهية والإنسانية والوحدة والوطنية والديمقراطية والعدالة الاجتماعية- تشكل فى ذاتها معنى سياسياً ثقافياً للأمة الدينية فى إندونيسيا لخلق مثل وحدة الفهم فى مجال البحث عن شكل لنظام سياسى غير المعتمد على مبدأ دينى (الإسلام) خاص، ولكن -فى نفس الوقت- الاعتراف كذلك بالسلطة والمؤسسة الدينية كجزء هام فى سير الدولة. فبذلك يمكن الادعاء بأنه مهما كانت إندونيسيا ليست بدولة ألوهية وأنها ليست كذلك بدولة علمانية التى تميز بين السياسة والدين. هذه الحالة ثبتت بصراحة بأن الحكومة الإندونيسية تهتم اهتماماً كبيراً للحياة والنشاط الدينيين، وليس للإسلام فحسب ولكن كذلك لكل الأديان الموجودة فى إندونيسيا.

أكثر من ذلك، إن المبادئ الخمسة أصبحت الروح الهامة فى تطوير الخطة الإيديولوجية بين الأمم المتدنية. هذه الحالة بالأخص لسبب التصريح بأن المبادئ الخمسة تعتبر القيمة الحقيقية التى يمكن أن يعتنقها ويعمل بها الشعب الإندونيسى دون معرفة الحدود الدينية. بناء على هذه الفكرة، فإسلام إندونيسيا يمكن أن يكون عينة حسنة لبحث مسألة السماح بين الأديان فى دولة حديثة. رغم أن الإسلام يعتبر تعاليم دينية التى يعتنقها أغلب سكان إندونيسيا فإن الجالية الإسلامية فى هذه الدولة قد وفقت فى تنسيق نظرة جماعية يمكن التوفيق بين كل المصالح الشعبية.

Introduction

We are living today in a fast shrinking world. Muslims and Islam no longer live "far" in the East away from the West, but are your next door neighbors in New York, London, Bonn or Paris. So, you and your Muslim neighbors need to live a peaceful life. And this can only be achieved through better mutual understanding and respect. We, who are now living in the global village, must clean away and clear up the ignorance, suspicion, and prejudice from among us. Islam, as a misunderstood religion, has been wrongly misperceived, by both Muslims and non-Muslims. This, in turn, creates many conflicts, many dangerous attitudes and behavior in the Muslim world and the West.

Each Department of Islamic Studies in Western Universities has the potential to be an important and strategic tool for improving and promoting better understanding of the Islamic world in the West. It is not an easy task to clear up misconceptions and overcome emotional relations between the Muslim world and the West. Throughout history Muslim and Christian (or Western) relations have been colored by the fierce battles of the Crusades, Western colonial expansion and domination, and bitter rivalry between Christian and Muslim missionaries.

It is not an exaggeration to say that improving relations between the West and the Muslim world can play a very important and strategic role in creating a better and more peaceful world today and tomorrow. Hence, for the sake of our children and our grand-children's peaceful futures, misunderstandings between the West and the Muslim world should be overcome.

Better mutual understanding and respect through dialogue and cooperation is the only alternative for preventing what Huntington and Juergensmeyer call the next clash of civilizations or the new cold war of the future. Even in the Islamic world itself there are misunderstandings about Islam such that it becomes a misunderstood religion. All of these are caused by certain inappropriate acts by both Muslims and non-Muslims. This is why every Muslim scholar and leader in the Islamic world should be asked to frankly reassess their attitudes and behavior, and to analyze internal and external factors in order to reduce and eliminate all these misunderstandings and distortions.

It is for this purpose that I am taking the opportunity to expose the Indonesian exercises to change the images of Islam and the Muslim world in the Western mind.

Islam is One, but Muslims are Many

Islam, as the youngest revealed Abrahamic religion with the Holy Book al-Qur'ân and the last Prophet Muhammad SAW, is adhered to by more than a billion of the 5.7 billion people in the world today.

Muslims are in the majority in more than 45 nations scattered from Morocco at the rim of the Atlantic Ocean to Merauke at the rim of the Pacific Ocean. The average annual population growth rate in the Muslim world for the last 15 years has been 2.6 %, compared to the average rate of 1.7 % for the world population, and 0.5 % for industrial countries. Based on this growth rate, it is estimated that by the year 2020, the population of the Muslim world will have grown to be around 25-30 % of the world population. This rapid population growth worries some observers in the West, who see it as a major potential challenge and threat to Western culture. This is a simplistic analysis or a misperception that will only exacerbate the already distorted relations between the West and the Muslim world.

Islam is belief in the Unity of God, revealed by God through teleangel communication by archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Peace be upon him). Although various religious and legal schools (*madhhab*) have developed in the Islamic world since its early history, the main and basic pattern of Islam is still one solid faith which every Muslim shares.

The great Holy Mosque in Mecca is the best place for one to observe the unity of Islam. Mecca itself is of course the center of the obligatory pilgrimage (*haj*), performed by almost two million Muslim pilgrims each year in recent years. All Muslims in Mecca and elsewhere in the Islamic world recite their prayers (*salâh*) during obligatory and recommended times in the Qur'anic Arabic language. They all direct their faces toward the Ka'bah, an ancient cubicle building reconstructed by the Prophet Abraham, at the very center of the Holy Mosque of Mecca. *Salâh* is started with the declaration of *Allâhu Akbar* (God is Great) and is ended with *salâm*, to be precise "*Assalâmu 'alaykum warahmatullâh wa barakâtuh*". The *salâm* symbolizes Islamic peace to the human and natural environment, and is a greeting by every Muslim to fellow Muslims in every place and at every time.

It appears that *salâm* is the last symbol of the fact that Islam is one. Because, after *salâm*, Muslims are many. Even though they are standing or sitting next to each other in the Holy Mosque of Mecca, and are directing their faces toward the Ka'ba while reciting their *du'â'* (invocation) and *dhikr* (remembrance of God) in the Arabic language, they cannot communicate with each other, because they speak different daily languages. Muslims in fact belong to many different nations, countries, and cultures. Moreover, Muslims apply different political systems in their countries such as republics or kingdoms with different ideologies; Islamism, secularism, capitalism, socialism, and even communism. But through *salâm* Muslims are unified in spite of these differences.

Economic Diversity: The Richest and the Poorest

It is well known that Islamic countries as a group are very poor. Although the population of the Islamic countries represents 18.4 % of the world population, their total GNP is equivalent to only 4.4 % of the world GNP. The total GNP of 46 Islamic countries comprised of more than a billion people is less than that of France with a population of 56 million. Even rich oil exporting countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Brunei, Qatar, Kuwait and UAE are not so rich compared with some industrial countries. In 1988 the GNP of Sweden alone was larger than the combined GNP of these six Islamic countries, although the richest people of the world today are in Brunei Darussalam.

The industrialized countries, with only 15.2 % of the world's population, create a whopping 74.3 % of the GNP of the entire world. The average annual income per capita in 1990 in Islamic countries was US \$ 847, compared to US \$ 12,510 in industrialized countries. A person living in an industrialized country earns almost 15 times what a person living in an Islamic country earns in a given year. Of the 39 least developed countries with GNP per capita of around US \$ 300 or less, nearly half (19) of them are Islamic countries. Some of the poorest countries in the world today are Islamic countries. With the exception of the six oil exporting countries, the remaining Islamic countries carry a heavy burden of external debts which, around 1990, was equivalent to 70 % of their total GNP.

Income in terms of GNP per capita, however, varies greatly among Islamic countries, where a few of these countries (UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Brunei and Saudi Arabia) have GNPs per capita which

are among the highest in the world, while a huge proportion of Islamic countries are among the lowest. Disparities in income also exist within each Islamic country between the few rich and the numerous poor, between men and women, and between urban and rural populations.

Poverty in Islamic countries is not so much due to the lack of natural resources or labor, but rather to their weaknesses in scientific and technological infrastructures. Skilled human resources are still scarce in Islamic countries. Around half the adult population is still illiterate; a very small proportion of students are in science and technical education; and average government expenditure on all levels of education is around 5 % of the GNP. While R & D expenditure in Islamic countries is around 0.3 % of the GNP; in industrialized countries R & D expenditure is 2.6 % of the GNP and the personnel involved in R & D is more than 10 times the number in Islamic countries (more than 2000 and less than 200 per million population). Education in science and technology is one of the basic items of importance in modern civilization.

Most Islamic countries are still fighting to fulfill the basic needs of human beings such as food, education, health, housing and the environment. On the other hand, some rich Islamic countries are too trapped in their internal problems to improve the quality of higher education. A strong and healthy economy is one of the basic requirements for becoming a world power in the modern world.

Political Varieties: Hard-Liners and Moderates

Politics, as in the West, is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Muslim world. Politics is the main focus used by observers and analysts for studying Islam and the Muslim world. The Iranian revolution and the Gulf war, for instance, have gripped Westerners' imagination for more than one and a half decades. As a result, the Muslim world has been perceived by the West as a threat or as the next threat to replace the communists. Many influential, albeit simplistic, analyses of this so-called Islamic threat were formulated in the West after the Iranian revolution and have not been adequately revised since then.

The perception of Islam and Muslim societies oscillates between excessive alarm and equally excessive neglect, both of which arise from ignorance. The evolution or revolution of the Muslim world will have enormous consequences for the entire world. How America

and the West in general deal with the Muslim world will contribute significantly to the choices these Islamic countries are making now and will make in the future.

The Muslim world is too large and too diverse to march to the beat of a single drummer. More and more moderate Muslim people (*ummatan washatan*) have developed and extended in the Muslim world. However, many in the West mistakenly assume that the Muslim world is only equivalent to the Middle East. Whereas, in fact, the Muslim world extends from Morocco in North Africa to Merauke on the eastern edge of Southeast Asia, from Uzbekistan on the southern western edge of the former Soviet Union to Cameroon in West Africa. In the same vein, one may observe that more Muslims live in China than on the Arabian Peninsula, and more live in Indonesia than in the entire Middle East. Therefore, in the 21st century there will be more Muslims than Russians, if we consider the current birth rates in the countries of the former USSR.

It is important to note that there are only two common elements in the Muslim world, namely the Islamic faith and the problems of political turbulence. The rivalries in the Muslim world have made it a caldron of conflict. Due to all these conflicts and political problems, many countries of the Muslim world spent over 8 % of their GNP on military expenditure for security and defense against possible surprise attacks from their hard-liners neighbors.

Most of the Islamic countries have traditionally and staunchly opposed communism. Communism was never strong in most Islamic countries. Islam has in many ways stood up to that test better than Christianity has, wrote the late President Richard Nixon.

The West must now begin to try to respect and understand the many and varied peoples of the Muslim world, who feel that they have been misunderstood, discriminated against, and exploited by Western powers. The West should not try to impose their values on Muslims. Although the Muslim world is left far behind the West in current political and economic developments, but this does not mean that Islamic civilizations are inferior to the West. The people of the Muslim world were (and still are) more resilient against the appeal of communism than those of the West. Their widespread rejection of the rampant materialism and moral permissiveness of the West places them squarely within the parameters of the so-called "family values" so touted in American politics today.

The Muslim world is not united in power and varies widely in socio-

political systems, behaviors and responses; it is not the monolith so feared by Westerners. Many unsolved political crises in the Muslim world have indicated how difficult it is for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (O.I.C.) to make any political decisions. The O.I.C. often lags behind the United Nations in making decisions and taking action. However, an indication of a probable future trend in the Muslim world occurred at the Islamic Conference for Ministers of Religious Affairs (M.R.A.) of the O.I.C.'s states and countries in Rabat in October last year. At this Conference all the M.R.A. agreed that Islam and the Muslim world would move towards the formation and development of the ummatan washatan (moderate and quality-oriented world community of Muslims). Fifty Islamic states and Muslim countries were represented at that historical meeting.

This is a critically important decision in the Muslim world for establishing a new image. The goal of developing this type of ummah was further elaborated upon through meetings of the expert committees of the ISESCO (Islamic UNESCO) this year. This is an early and good sign towards better and healthier political and cultural developments in most of the Muslim world, which in turn will reduce its possible clash with the Western world.

The Muslims in Southeast Asia

One fifth of the population of the Muslim world lives in Southeast Asia. Geographically, they are at the periphery of the Muslim world. Despite the fact that a large proportion of the Muslim world population lives in Southeast Asia, not much attention has been paid to them by either Muslim or Western scholars. As a result, it is very difficult to find a comprehensive contemporary literature or textbook on Islam and Muslims in this region.

This lack of attention and literature may be caused by two important factors:

1. They are relatively quiet Muslims;
2. They are too far from the center of the Islamic world and the Western world.

As far as Islam and the Muslim world are concerned, the attention of scholars is mostly paid to on the Middle East, and beyond the Middle East is confined to Pakistan and India. Many experts in Islamic studies in both the Muslim world and the Western world, in the last ten years, have honestly admitted that they know nothing

about this very quiet Muslim region of Southeast Asia. In contrast, too much attention has been paid by the world, especially the Western world, to negative situations such as the Vietnam War or conflicts in Indo-China and China, while the world's scholars neglect and are excessively ignorant of the peace-loving and smiling Muslim *ummah* in the Southeast Asian region.

Muslims are the majority in Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei. They are the minority in Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Burma and Indo-China. Islam arrived and spread throughout Southeast Asia through a process of peaceful co-optation which spanned centuries.

The Islamization process in this region is a continuing process which affects not only our present, but also our future. Colonial administrations in Southeast Asia used to refer to "many Islams" in this region, such as Javanese Islam, Sundanese Islam, Minangkabau Islam, Acehnese Islam, Buginese Islam, Malay Islam and so on. Today the '*ulamâ*' (Muslim religious scholars) have stated that Islam in this region is one; that Muslims in the region are also one, they are Sunnî and of the Shâfi'ite legal school. They are of course, still diverse in their cultural expression, depending on their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. And there is no doubt that their cultures have been significantly influenced by Islam.

Thus, it is no longer tenable to refer to Islam as simply "a thin flaking glaze" upon the indigenous religious complexity of Southeast Asia. Islam made and continuously makes a profound impact upon the socio-cultural, political and economic life of Southeast Asia.

Islam was not the first great religion to flourish in the fertile soil of Southeast Asia. The religious history of the region is very complex. Hinduism was the first to arrive in this region, then Buddhism, Islam and later Christianity. These great religions clearly planted seeds that grew with Southeast Asia's people. There was a great mixture of religious tradition which is, perhaps, unparalleled by any other region of the globe. Although Muslims are the majority in Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia, Buddhism and Confucianism, Christianity and Hinduism are also followed by a sizeable proportion of the community. Religious pluralism has been very observable in the picture of this region since the dawn of its history. These religious waves followed each other mostly in peaceful, historical sequences.

Again, there is considerable variety among the Muslim population in the area. Brunei is the most prosperous Islamic kingdom in the region, with a population of 260,000 people who are almost 100

% Muslim. With an average annual income per capita of about US \$ 30,000—more than that of Switzerland—the Bruneis are perhaps the richest people in the world. Malaysia with a total population of almost 19 million—a little over 50 % are Muslim—is developing a very dynamic economy without substantial Western aid. Malaysia is a good example of a self-supporting developing country with an income per capita a little more than US \$ 3,000. Meanwhile, Singaporean Muslims, in spite of the fact that they are a minority, live in an Islamic way with a very well-organized community. In every government of the secular Republic of Singapore, there is a Malay origin Minister who is officially in charge of Islamic affairs. The population of Singapore is around 2.5 million people with an average income per capita of about US \$ 15,000. Muslims constitute 15.3 % of the population.

Every year there are senior officials meetings and informal Ministerial Meetings of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Since 1989, the Ministers of Religious Affairs of BIMS (abbreviation of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore), have held an annual meeting to discuss the development of the ummah's economy, the control of *halâl* (lawful) food, unification and integration of methods of the *hisâb* ("calculation") and *ru'yah* ("viewing the moon") to determine the start and the end of the fasting month (*Ramadân*), all important aspects of observing Islamic ways.

These annual meetings have indirectly enhanced the *ukhuwwah Islâmiyyah* (Islamic brotherhood), not only at the official level, but also at the popular level. Furthermore, through these meetings, we are able to prevent religious developments from becoming overheated and infiltrated by hardliner groups either from inside or outside of the Southeast Asian region. The mechanism for the prevention of the deviation of certain segments of the *ummah* from the true Islamic teachings is established through the Councils of the 'Ulamâ'. In these councils, the 'ulamâ' discuss religious developments in the region by using the standard parameter of the Qur'ân and the Hadîth (Prophetic Tradition).

After the end of confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia, during President Soekarno's tenure, the Southeast Asian nations formed the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which plays an important role in establishing and developing the unity of the Southeast Asian people.

The euphoria generated by the end of the cold war is now dissipating, because we are observing increasing disorder in many parts of the world. In striking contrast, Southeast Asia continues to enjoy relative peace and stability. In general, Southeast Asian economic growth is very impressive. The economies of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia in particular are growing very well and have been referred by the World Bank as an economic miracle. Singapore and Brunei also have strong economic development and play important roles in the activities of the booming trading and finance centers in Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asia will thus inevitably become a dynamic region and an economic center in the Asia-Pacific region. Although Muslims are the majority in Southeast Asia, they behave and think as moderates. They are of course very dedicated and devout Muslims, but less Arabicized in behavior and culture. Islamic development in this region is strongly influenced by the moderate opinion and attitude of Sunnî Islam from the Shâfi'ite legal school.

A new image of Islam is in the making in Southeast Asia, especially among the younger generation. They are more well-educated, enjoy better economic conditions and are devout and tolerant Muslims. Anti-Western sentiment has not developed in this region, except in the case of solidarity, for instance, with the Bosnian Muslims. They selectively accept and resist Westernization, because they are confident in their culture and religion. So, the religion of Islam and the Muslims of Southeast Asia shows 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.

The Indonesian Exercises

In order for the West to understand Islam and Muslim in Southeast Asia better, it is time to pay more attention to them in the largest archipelagic state in the world, namely Indonesia. As the most populous Muslim country in the world, for instance, the Indonesian exercises can provide Westerners with a better grasp of Islam and Muslims.

Indonesia is a unitary republic that proclaimed its independence on August 17, 1945. Although the actual transfer of power from the Dutch colonial government took place as late as December 1949 as agreed at the Round Table Conference in The Hague, we firmly maintain that Indonesia as an independent nation-state started to ex-

ist on the day of the proclamation. Therefore, in August of this year, we commemorated the "golden celebration" of the fiftieth year of Indonesian independence.

According to the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, the aims of the state are to protect the people and the homeland, to strive for better quality human resources, to enhance the prosperity of the nation, and to participate in the creation and preservation of world peace. In order to achieve these objectives, the Republic of Indonesia bases its very existence on a philosophy consisting of five principles called Pancasila. These principles are: belief in the One Supreme God, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations in representative bodies, and social justice for all people.

Because the term "Pancasila" is a human invention derived from Sanskrit, and not from religious vocabularies, some observers are of the opinion that Indonesia is a secular state. Such an observation is indeed incorrect. Indonesia is not a secular state in the true meaning of complete separation of state and religion.

According to article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, the state of Indonesia is based on belief in the One Supreme God (*Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*). This article shows that the Indonesian nation and the state of Indonesia do not separate themselves from religious life and values. This does not mean, however, that Indonesia is a theocratic state, for the Republic of Indonesia does not have any official religion. Even though Muslims make up the vast majority of the population, Indonesia does not declare Islam as the state religion. In fact, Indonesia recognizes equally the existence of five religions, namely, Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The state helps these religions promote their values among their respective adherents. Thus, it is clear that Indonesia is neither a secular nor a theocratic state.

The adoption of Pancasila as the national ideology is not coincidental. Rather, it is the result of careful nurturing and the realization of the history of the nation and its religious and cultural values. Indonesians strongly believe that adherence to a particular religion is one of the basic human rights, granted only by the grace of God, and not by the state. Therefore, it is considered improper for the state to lift this gracious grant from God by introducing complete separation of religion and the state. It must be kept in mind, however, that the absence of separation between religion and the state does not mean that the state can freely interfere in the theological and doctrinal as-

pects of any religion. As far as this matter is concerned, the role of the state is the promotion of religious feeling among its citizens and maintenance of harmony and tolerance among different religious groups.

Religious tolerance is particularly important in the context of the nation-state of Indonesia which consists not only of different ethnic and cultural groups but also of different religious entities. More clearly still, Indonesian religious pluralism is reflected in the composition of the total population according to religious affiliation. According to the latest statistics, the total Indonesian population of 195 million people consists of 87.21 % Muslims; 6.4 % Protestants; 3.58 % Catholics; 1.83 % Hindus; 1.03 % Buddhists; and 0.31 % animists.

Thus, religious differences or discord among religious groups could become a factor in conflicts and cause the disintegration of the state. This, unfortunately, has been the history of many societies in the world. In modern times, one can also see very clearly that religious differences can result in disturbances and civil wars, although they are often also colored by political, economic and ethnic motives. All this points to the fact that the Indonesian adoption of the Pancasila ideology which make Indonesia neither a secular nor a theocratic state is the wisest and the best decision the founding fathers of the state have ever made.

Muslim leaders played a crucial role in the acceptance of Pancasila as the Indonesian national ideology. If one looks to the history of Pancasila, one cannot deny that the Investigating Body for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence had agreed on 22 June 1945 to accept the Muslims' proposal for the Preamble (*Mukaddimah*) to the Constitution. In the *Mukaddimah*, better known as the "Piagam Jakarta" (Jakarta Charter), it is stated that "the Indonesian state is based on the belief in the One Supreme God with the obligation for the adherents of Islam to implement the *syari'ah*" (Islamic law). This stipulation written in the Indonesian language is known in Indonesia as "the seven words" of the Piagam Jakarta.

Some subsequent developments, however, took their course. On August 17, 1945, the day of the proclamation of Indonesian independence, the draft of the national constitution which included the Jakarta Charter that had been prepared by the Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence, was brought by President Soekarno and Vice President Mohammad Hatta to the next day's meeting (August 18, 1945) to be formally accepted.

On the morning of August 18, 1945, a Japanese officer brought a number of Christian leaders from Eastern Indonesia to meet the Vice President, Mohammad Hatta. These Christian leaders had some objections to the draft of the national constitution, in particular to the "seven words" in the Preamble and the prerequisite for the Indonesian president to be a Muslim. They argued that furthermore the national constitution should not give preferential treatment to any religious group; the national constitution should maintain the pluralism and integration of the nation.

Mohammad Hatta, a pious Muslim, called on Muslim leaders to discuss this political aspiration of the Christian leaders. Hatta persuaded and convinced them that this political aspiration was quite logical and understandable. The Muslims' acceptance of this political aspiration would maintain national integrity and unity among the adherents of different religions in Indonesia.

Hatta was successful in winning the hearts and trust of Muslim leaders. Within a short time, the Islamic leaders agreed to omit the "seven words" before "*Ketuhanan*" (God), which specifically emphasized the obligation of the Muslim ummah to implement the *shari'ah* in their lives. These "seven words" were changed to "*Yang Maha Esa*" (One Supreme). Muslim leaders also agreed to omit the written prerequisite for the Indonesian president to be a "Muslim". There is no doubt that the fact that the Muslim leaders only needed a short meeting to omit the Jakarta Charter consensus or gentleman's agreement is a great symbol of the strong national integrity and tolerance of Muslim leaders and the *ummah* as a whole. For the record, all of the acceptance was formally declared on 18 August, 1945, when the Indonesian Constitution of 1945 was declared to take effect.

We, of course, frankly admit that there were still lawful and unlawful attempts in the 1950s among Muslims to make Islam the ideological foundation of Indonesia. But the growth of the idea of national unity was far stronger among the vast majority of Muslims. All Muslim leaders and organizations have been in agreement that Pancasila is the inalienable integrating factor for the Indonesian state. Therefore, it is not surprising that, for instance, not long ago Ahmad Siddiq, the late leading scholar of the Nahdhatul Ulama—one of the largest Indonesian Muslim organizations in Indonesia—emphatically stated that Pancasila is the final form of the Muslim struggle in Indonesia.

All the above cases clearly show that Muslims in Indonesia have

put into practice the idea of religious tolerance both at the individual, communal and national levels. Religious harmony and tolerance have become a fact of life in Indonesia. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Indonesian experience in this regard can be a good example for all those concerned not only with the issue of the relationship between politics and religion but also with a better perception of Islam.

Religious harmony and tolerance is obviously instrumental in the maintenance of Indonesian national unity. Therefore, the Indonesian government has continuously fostered religious harmony and tolerance through three kinds of religious tolerance which should be implemented by various sectors of the society: firstly, mutual tolerance and respect among religions; secondly, tolerance among groups within a particular religion; and lastly, tolerance between all religious groups and the government.

In order to achieve and maintain religious harmony and tolerance, councils were established for the leaders of the five officially recognized religions in Indonesia. These councils of religious leaders are known follows: Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Council of the Indonesian 'Ulamâ') for Islam; Konperensi Waligereja Indonesia (Conference of Indonesian Church Leaders) for Catholicism; Persatuan Gereja Indonesia (Union of Indonesian Churches) for Protestantism; Perwalian Ummat Budha (Authority of Buddhist Adherents) for Buddhism; and Parisadha Hindu Dharma (Association of Dharma Hinduism) for Hinduism. All these councils form a communication forum as a coordinating body to discuss various religious and social issues. They serve not only as the consolidating force for the followers of their respective religions, but also as a bridge between the religious groups and the government. Standing hand-in-hand with the Department of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, all the councils of religious leaders play a crucial role in the promotion of healthy and peaceful development of religious life in the country.

There is no doubt that religious harmony and tolerance contribute a great deal to the dynamic development of religious life in today's Indonesia. As one may observe, both quantitatively and qualitatively, religions are showing a revival. Mosques, churches and other places for religious rituals are full of religious adherents. More and more new places of worship have been and are being built; but it looks as if they are still not sufficient. To take Islam as an example, in the last few years Indonesia has sent the largest contingents (almost 200,000 Muslims) per year of haj pilgrims to Mecca among those originating

from outside of Saudi Arabia. Last year, around 40,000 haj aspirants were put on a waiting list, because their total number had exceeded the Indonesian quota of pilgrims, set by the Saudi Government. For next year's haj season, the registration for pilgrimage had to be closed in less than two months, because so many enthusiastic pilgrim candidates registered.

The role of religions in Indonesia is not limited to the maintenance of national unity and the improvement of religious life. Religions also play an important role in the acceleration of national development. Religious leaders have, in fact, been key factors in the success of many development programs.

The success story of Indonesian population control is a good example in this respect. As may be known, Indonesia has been, and is still, one of the most populous countries in the world. Almost all experts have agreed that uncontrolled growth of the population will be a heavy burden for national development; it will drain many of the nation's resources.

On the basis on this, since the early 1970s—along with the national development plan—the government launched a nationwide family planning program, which has proven to be very successful. And that success story has led the UN to give a special award to the Indonesian government.

One key factor in that success story is the participation of Indonesian religious leaders encouraging people to take part in the family planning program. In the early 1980s, the Council of the Indonesian 'Ulama, for instance, made a judicial pronouncement (*fatwâ*) to the effect that because of the pressure of Indonesian population growth and for the sake of the welfare of the society as one of the main goals of any religious teachings, the use of IUDs was not in violation of Islamic doctrines provided that their insertion was carried out by female doctors or by male doctors in the presence of the husband. The impact of this *fatwâ* (legal decree) on the people was immediately observable. According to the statistics, in 1972 there were only about 500,000 IUD users throughout the country. In 1981 this figure jumped to 2 million; in 1982 to 2.4 million; in 1983 to 2.9 million; and in 1984 to 3.9 million.

It must be borne in mind, however, that one must be very careful not to credit the above mentioned dramatic increase in IUD users solely to the *fatwâ* of the 'ulamâ'. But the fact remains that the *fatwâ* provided the government with the necessary confidence to pursue

the family planning program more vigorously. The Indonesian government is now happy to acknowledge that religious leaders with their religious advice have played important roles in the success of the national family planning program.

The average number of children in Indonesian families has been reduced from 5.6 in 1970 to around 2.8 children at present. The population growth rate which was more than 2.5 % per year in 1970 has been reduced to 1.6 % annually today. Life expectancy in 1970 was 46 years, now it is 63 years. This success has led Indonesia to win international recognition as a model for other developing countries in their population control program.

The role of religious leaders in development projects is not confined to family planning. It is also observable in various economic and welfare projects. Religious leaders take an active part, for instance, in promoting cooperatives in the villages and in local Islamic educational institutions. They also participate in the campaign for child survival and nutrition programs. Education and efforts against illiteracy are other areas with a lot of participation by religious leaders.

One of the most dramatic achievements in the last 25 years of Indonesian development can be observed in the economic field. Economic growth reached 8.3 % in the last five years, and income per capita rose from US \$ 75 in 1970, to nearly US \$ 950 today. Meanwhile in the political and diplomatic fields, in September of 1992, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Soeharto, became the chairman of the Non Alignment Movement (NAM), which consists of more than 110 nations for a three year period. President Soeharto was successful in changing the direction of the NAM onto an economic focus, rather than a political one. At the Asian Pacific Leaders Meeting on November 15, 1994, chaired by President Soeharto, he was very successful in the preparation of the Asia Pacific region as the most dynamic area in the 21st century.

Using an intricate mathematical formula to rate national power, Indonesia was once considered by Dr. Ray S. Cline as the tenth most powerful nation in the world. This ranking is not based on economic and military capabilities, but on the size of the population and territory.

In further analysis we find that Indonesian economic and educational developments are quite dependent on the West. The strategy of religious development in Indonesia is developing Indonesian Muslims to become the *ummatan washatan* (moderate and quality oriented ummah).

What is to be achieved by this moderate strategy becomes the ideal target of Islam and the Muslim world today and tomorrow.

Conclusion

A promising trend of Islam and the Muslim world started to develop in October of last year in Morocco during the meeting of Ministers of Religious Affairs of 59 Islamic states and Muslim countries. *Ummatan washatan* (moderate and quality oriented nation) has been the paradigm adopted to establish a new image of Islam and the Muslim world. The formation and development of the *ummatan washatan* will be led by all Muslim leaders and scholars today and tomorrow.

This trend of searching for a moderate and quality oriented *ummah* has been implemented and developed by Southeast Asian Muslims for decades of their development, in particular Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Although they are dedicated and devout Muslims, the attitude and the culture of Muslims in this region are less Arabicized. An economic boom and quality education will cause Muslims in this region to play increasingly important roles in achieving the Conference's goal of a loving and peaceful *ummah* in the modern religious environment.

After the first 25 years of national development, the archipelagic state of Indonesia with its very wide diversity of races, ethnic groups and religions, has systematically developed a modern strategy of a moderate *ummah*. And Indonesia could become a leader for developing countries in the common success of material and spiritual development.

Looking at the success of the Indonesian exercises in developing religious harmony and tolerance, there is no doubt that a similar religious harmony and tolerance can also be developed in the global village, in which we all live as a whole and big family.

Hopes for a better future and a peaceful world for our children and grandchildren can only be realized if religious prejudice is replaced by religious harmony and tolerance. Systematic and concerted efforts of dialogues and cooperation should be fostered between scholars of the Muslim world, in particular Southeast Asian Muslims, and influential Western Universities in the foreseeable future.

Tarmizi Taher is the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. This essay is originally delivered at the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, November 8, 1995.