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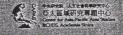
ISLAM IN CONTENTION:
RETHINKING ISLAM AND STATE IN INDONESIA

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INTRODUCTION

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In April 2009, a book titled *An Illusion of Islamic State: Expansion of Transnational Islamic Movement in Indonesia* (*Ilusi Negara Islam: Ekspansi Gerakan Islam Transnasional di Indonesia*) was launched in Indonesia [Wahid 2009]. The book triggered considerable polemic on the current Islamic thoughts and movements in Indonesia, which had the effect of polarizing these realities into two schools. One is that of moderate Islamic groups, which hold the diversity of local society and culture in Indonesia in high regard and, therefore, adheres to the state ideology of Pancasila. The two largest Islamic social organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah belong to this school. The other is that of transnational radical Islamic groups and their spearheads in Indonesia, whose ultimate aim, according to the book, is to establish an Islamic state. Toward this end, the school asserts its understanding of Islam as the only legitimate and justifiable position. The Defenders' Front of Islam (Front Pembela Islam, FPI), the Liberation Party of Indonesia (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, HTI), and the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS) are categorized in this school, some groups in which do not hesitate to use violence against those opposed to them.

Written and published by moderate Islamic groups, the book intended to alert Indonesians to the rapid expansion and infiltration of transnational radical Islam in Indonesia. In this light it lumped FPI, HTI, and PKS in one school. The intriguing aspect here is the fact that the book became a source of severe controversy among In-

donesian Muslim intellectuals. While this may show that Indonesia today enjoys freedom of expression and thought under a democratic regime, it also proves that democratic Indonesia is still a long way from finding an appropriate, suitable, and consensual relationship among Islam, society, and the state.

In fact, Indonesia today is desperately seeking such an appropriate three-cornered relationship. However, this search is by no means new; it has actually been a kind of recurrent phenomenon since the coming of Islam to present-day Indonesia. After the birth of the Republic of Indonesia in the mid-1940s, for example, some leading lights of the Islamic movement such as Mohammad Natsir propagated the adoption of "Jakarta Charter," which contained the sentence "with the obligation to live according to Islamic law for Muslims." Some of these figures insisted on the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia in the era of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s. The Islamic movement declined, however, at the height of the authoritarian Suharto regime in the mid-1960s. The polemics related to the interrelationship among Islam, society, and the state also disappeared from the public discourse.

After thirty-two years of political oppression, Indonesian democratization since 1998 has reawakened the struggle to find an ideal interrelationship among Islam, society, and the state. The book *An Illusion of Islamic State* and the polemic that attended it were just one of the many examples of the struggle related to the social and political positioning of Islam. The demand of FPI and KISDI (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam or Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Islamic World) to revive Jakarta Charter, the violence against Ahmadiyah, a minority group in Islam, and the debate over the antipornography law are other examples.

Significantly, the "revitalized" polemic and tensions are taking place in a totally different social and political landscape from that obtaining in the mid-1940s and 1950s. That is why the motives, strategies, and methods of Islamic groups are different from those in the past—and therefore they are not at all atavistic. At least three prominent characteristics of current Indonesian Islam clearly differ from those of the previous period. The first is the deepening

social Islamization, the second is the weakening Islamic parties, and the third is the intensifying social conflict surrounding Islam. These three characteristics deserve closer examination.

Islamization in Society

As almost all scholars on Indonesian Islam would agree that Islamization has deepened in Indonesian society since late 1970s and that it has accelerated since late 1990s. For example, the large bookstores such as Gramedia and Gunung Agung carry a large section of the books on Islam, and old and young alike have been browsing these books. The journals and magazines on Islam have become quite common and popular after the democratization. The anti-Zionism and anti-US magazine *Sabili* was the best-selling journal following democratization, while an Islamic magazine, *Hidayah*, which is full of stories on the tragedy of sinful Muslims, has also become a top-seller. Islamic *manga* are now becoming an important genre of the manga. Islamic pop by Opick and other Islamic singers have also gained currency. Pop music groups such as Ungu and Gigi have begun to sing Islam-nuanced songs.

The female headscarf, the *jilbab*, has become normal wear. Among the Javanese in Yogyakarta, the Islamic wedding is gaining more favor than its old traditional Javanese counterpart. Even the Pemuda Pancasila (Pancasila Youth), comprising co-opted thugs (*preman*), which had underpinned the New Order, has been increasingly Islamized at least in appearance. For example, the chief of its national headquarters and the provincial branch head of East Java province have been portraying themselves as "pious" Muslim in the organization's brochures and pamphlets. The deepening social Islamization might be well evident in the fact that Muhammadiyah, which used to be a progressive group and a major importer of Islamic reformist movement, now belongs to the same "moderate" group with NU in the prevailing "radical-moderate" dichotomy, as demonstrated in *An Illusion of Islamic State*.

The diversity of preaching (*dakwah* or *da'wah*) media most certainly contributes to social Islamization. These days it is quite easy to have an access to Islamic media not only in the cities but also in

rural communities. Everyone can watch Zainuddin MZ, "a Preacher for a Million *Umma*" on television where there is a variety of and can listen to various types of preachers and teachings. A mentally unstable urban middle-class woman can go on telephone counseling with an Islamic preacher. Or a middle-class student facing an identity crisis in the big city can join some sort of Tarbiyah movement or other types of Islamic teaching groups. During Ramadan, private TV stations broadcast a flood of Islamic soap operas and music programs. Islamic pop music and comics also have their share of the entertainment sector. One could subscribe to Islamic teachings via SMS. Cyberspace is filled with various types of Islamic interpretations through websites and SNS. Today something Islamic is attractive, cool, and marketable especially for the emergent urban middle class. Islam is being commercialized.

However, Islam is not just a simple good or service but a religion that has the potential to influence human behavior and thinking in a deeper sense. As such, adopting pious Islamic looks, attitudes, and behaviors is a manifestation of deeply rooted social Islamization.

While it has become increasingly natural for Indonesian Muslims to project Islamic piety, it does not necessarily mean that they fully subscribe to the Islamization of judicial administration. According to a survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute on "The trend of support toward the Islamic values vs toward the secular values and the Influence of Political Islam," a mere 22 percent of the respondents object to a female president and only 25 percent support the jilbab police. Some 61 percent object to the Islamic sentence of chopping off hands. On the other hand, 40 percent of the respondents support the religious police and 39 percent support the government prohibition on bank interest rates [Lembaga Survei Indonesia, October 2007]. These results show that the Indonesian society only selectively supports Islamic judicial administration.

WEAKENING AND MODERATING ISLAMIC PARTIES

Interestingly, social Islamization does not lead to the rise of Islamic parties. Let's look at the changing voting trends among Islamic

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parties. Islamic parties include every party with Islam as the party principle and every party with Islamic social organizations as their supporting bases. The Islamic parties gained around 38 percent of the votes in the elections of 1999 and 2004, respectively, but they reduced their votes to around 29 percent in the 2009 election. The support base has apparently been on the wane, considering the fact that Islamic parties such as Masyumi party and NU party obtained around 45 percent of the votes in 1955. One of the reasons is that Islam has become less appealing as political slogan to the voters. Parties merely selling "Islam" cannot attract voters in an increasingly Islamized society. The historical legacy of the anticommunist Suharto regime lives in post-Suharto Indonesia where leftist parties enjoy little political appeal and support. This political landscape is quite different from that of 1950s when the Communist and Socialist Parties wielded strong influence. Accordingly, voters with a strong anticommunist orientation today have no reason to support Islamic parties. Even the so-called secular parties such as Golkar party and PDIP (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan or the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) are actually not anti-Islam, and the pious Muslim voters no longer feel uneasy voting for them.

Golkar had been "greening" since the late Suharto period by recruiting the prospective members of Islamic Students' Association (Himpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia, HMI), an independent Islamic organization. HMI leaders were well trained on how to make impressive speeches and organize seminars and workshops, and how to negotiate with politicians including senior Golkar members. In that sense, Golkar had good reasons to recruit them. Democratization has not stopped this "greening" process within Golkar either. Some of the *kyai* (*kiai*) that willingly or grudgingly supported the Golkar in the New Order continued to support the Golkar party in the era of democracy. Thus the Golkar party cannot simply be called a secular party.

PDIP has often been considered more secular than Golkar and these days the party is desperate to dilute its *abangan*-ness. When Megawati, a daughter of charismatic first president of Indonesia, Sukarno, ran for the presidency from the party in 2004, she wore a headscarf in an effort to appear like a pious Muslim and fend

off criticism over a female presidential candidate. In 2007, PDIP established an Islam section called "the House of Muslim" (Baitul Muslimin) to accommodate less secular Muslim voters. On the political surface at least, the "secular" parties are becoming more and more Islamized, blurring the distinction between secular and Islam parties.

Islamic parties have been changing, too. In the first general election of 1999 after the fall of Suharto, both the PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa or National Awakening Party), with NU as its base, and PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional or National Mandate Party), with Muhammadiyah as its base, decided not to adopt Islam as their parties' principle. Instead they chose Pancasila partly because they highly valued the religious diversity of Indonesia and partly because they aimed to gain wider support by differentiating themselves from Islamist parties such as PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or United Development Party), Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB, the Crescent Star Party), and Partai Keadilan (PK, the Justice Party). This strategy didn't go well, however, and PKB and PAN weakened considerably in the elections of 1999, 2004, and 2009. They failed to widen their support base beyond their original social organizations, and even those belonging to these two organizations split their votes to splinter parties such as PPNUI (Partai Persatuan Nahdlatul Ummah Indonesia or Nahdlatul Ummah Unity Party of Indonesia) and National Sunny Party (Partai Matahari Bangsa).

The only party that could increase its political influence was PK or, later, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). This party created a new strategy by appealing to clean politics based on Islamic ethics and the eradication of corruption. PKS's national and local politicians returned the budget allocated to the national and local governments when the allocation was just for their own benefit, such as the travel fee and the special bonus for the breaking of the Ramadan fast (*Idul Fitri*). And whenever and wherever an earthquake struck, they were the first to visit the disaster sites and organized relief activities with the banner of the party. The strategy worked, and the voting percentage jumped from 1.7 percent to 7.3 percent. The party became the largest party in the capital of Jakarta and wielded significant influence in urban areas in 2004. Finally, PKS became one

of the ruling coalition parties in the Yudhoyono administration.

PKS was and is an Islamist party with Islam as its principle, but it succeeded in gaining greater political power by not emphasizing its Islamist ideology during the election campaign. The party played down its original standpoints on the introduction of Islamic law and the establishment of an Islamic state with a view to gain voter support and swiftly and pragmatically became moderate. The 2009 election accelerated this moderate trend. The party set the goal of being one of the three largest parties by raising the voting percentage to 20 percent. Support from the urban areas was not enough and rural support was imperative to achieve the target.

Thus PKS launched a series of provocative election ads. One applauded Suharto as among the seven national heroes and teachers—an assertion based on research conducted by PKS showing that Suharto was still popular among the rural voters. Another ad featured a young woman with no jilbab soliciting support for the party. This reckless aggrandizement strategy failed, however, and the party just obtained 7.9 percent of the total votes in the 2009 election, or a mere increase of 0.5 percent from the 2004 election results. The party fell between two stools. On the one hand, the Islamist voters were disappointed with the party's pragmatism. On the other hand, the floating voters did not switch their votes to PKS but to the Democrat Party (Partai Demokrat, PD) led by Yudhoyono. It was symbolic that the PD, replacing PKS, became the largest party in Jakarta.

In a nutshell, the secular parties Golkar and PDIP have been undergoing a "greening" process to reach out to the pious voters while the Islamic parties have been diluting their greenness. Both groups are anyhow aspiring to the centrist axis. The PD typifies this trend. According to its official website, PD is both a nationalist and religious party. Its election ads had depicted it as a centrist party. This centrist policy by a non-Islamic party succeeded quite well, and the party became the largest party with around 21 percent of the votes. The party's presidential candidate, Yudhoyono, is knowledgeable about Islam and has faced little criticism from the Islamist groups. The secular camp regards him as a moderate Muslim and doesn't believe that Yudhoyono, who has had a long military career,

would support the introduction of Islamic laws and the establishment of an Islamic state.

Even though the Islamic parties are weakening, Indonesian politics itself is on the centrist path with some emphasis on Islamic elements, and the current Yudhoyono government has co-opted the major Islamic and Islamist parties in the coalition. In that sense, social Islamization is not inconsistent with the weakening of Islamic parties. Social Islamization itself has weakened Islamic parties.

THE DEEPENING SOCIAL CONFLICT ON ISLAM

The weakening of Islamic parties doesn't mean that a relative peace is now being forged among various Islamic social groups, however. A conflict might become a physical one when the issues are related to the freedom of religion and belief and the freedom of speech and expression such as the (Islamic) moral appropriateness of costumes and clothes that a female artist, singer, or dancer wears in public, or that of the contents of a TV program or film. These cases are very visible, which is why everyone can easily have his/her own moral judgment. And with the start of democracy, it has been quite easy for every such opinion to be aired in public through various media. So, a small controversy related to morality among the intellectuals and professionals can potentially have a snowball effect involving various social groups in the controversy, which sometimes ends in physical conflict—as did the antipornography law and the ban on Ahmadiyah, as cited in the book. Indonesia is still socially volatile. The political "peace" attained with the birth of the coalition government led by Yudhoyono does not mean that Indonesian democracy has been consolidated in a substantial sense of the word.

Recognizing these sociopolitical situations in Indonesia, this particular book draws attention to the following points. Part I deals with a theoretical discussion on the role of Islam and the state to achieve social justice. It opens with a correspondence between a religious leader and a social scientist. Masdar F Mas'udi, director of the NU headquarters, discusses that the state in Islamic teachings is entirely a social and humanitarian institution, which is responsible for

guaranteeing justice. Islam, according to Masdar, must inspire the state toward this end. Sociologist H. H. Michael Hsiao points out the affinity between Islamic values in the Qur'an and the contemporary intellectual discourse on the advocacy of human rights. He argues that the ideal state in Islam approaches the modern welfare state.

Part II discusses the three hot issues in contemporary Indonesian Islam. Abubakar Eby Hara discusses the debate over the implementation of *perda syari'ah* (Islamic bylaws) at several local provinces. He points out that in the course of the debate, both the supporters and opponents have come to refer to Pancasila as the main platform on which to establish their argument. Pancasila today seems to be gaining new life as a basis for agreement among groups of different opinions, although we should not forget that Pancasila is a very open-ended concept that allows multiple interpretations. Marzuki Wahid discusses the formation and aftermath of the Counter Legal Draft to Islamic Law Compilation (CLD-KHI) compiled in 2004, intended to counter the legal reference currently used by judges of the Religious Court. The CLD-KHI itself shortly provoked nationwide repercussions. Marzuki's analysis shows how Indonesian Muslims are split over sensitive legal issues such as polygamy and contract marriage. Abdur Rozaki discusses the debate over the law to regulate pornography. Rozaki argues that the issue, which should have been discussed in terms of public morals and the protection of women and children, became political capital for several political leaders to collect Muslim votes. Ahmad Suaedy discusses collective violence against religious minorities, both within and outside Islam. Examining recent cases, he analyzes a pattern in the process leading to violent action. He warns that the weak attitude of religious and state authorities such as MUI (the Indonesian Council of Ulama), the Department of Religious Affairs, and the Yudhoyono government gives room for radical circles to resort to violence. These discussions show greater complexity beyond the aforementioned radical-moderate dichotomy. Debates surrounding the antipornography law, for example, covered a wide range of issues such as the protection of social—and not necessarily religious—moralities, and concern about the increasing role of the state in intervening in private

affairs. These complexities reveal the wide social effects of Islam-related legal and political issues.

Part III pays due attention to the strategies of three political institutions to seek mass support. The analysis is directed to the two contrasting (radical and moderate) Islamic camps, HTI and the PKS, and the centrist Yudhoyono government. Fahlesa Munabari examines the history, structure, and support-seeking strategies of HTI, which has recently received increasing attention because of its growing public support and its striking appeal to reestablish the caliphate. Munabari deciphers HTI's seemingly confusing remarks and activities, such as its self-proclaimed pacifism and its apparent openness to participate in elections in spite of its rejection of parliamentary democracy. Okamoto Masaaki examines the "realistic" strategy of the PKS to expand its support base. Tracing the shifts in the election strategies not only in the central readership but also in the local PKS in Banten and other regions, Okamoto asserts that the PKS is transforming to a "normal" party with less Islamic nuances. Sasaki Takuo discusses the Islam-related policies of the Yudhoyono government against the background of moderate Islam, the dominant current of Indonesian Islam. Sasaki explains that Yudhoyono's politics have been consistently pragmatic. Even the widely criticized government decree against Ahmadiyah was, according to Sasaki, based on pragmatic thought. Munabari and Okamoto point out that HTI and the PKS, respectively, have made every effort to obtain mass support, while the Yudhoyono government, according to Sasaki, seems to embody the hopes of the majority moderate Islam most effectively.

Part IV focuses on some important aspects of the process of social Islamization. Two of the groups strongly susceptible to the Islamization in Indonesia are women and the Chinese. Kobayashi Yasuko discusses the ulama's shifting perspectives on women's social status, on the basis of the examination of the NU's legal forum's discussion, *Bahtsul Masa'il* (discussions of issues), from 1926 to 2004. Although ulama's decisions seem increasingly progressive and respectful of women during the period in discussion, Kobayashi points out persistent conservative ideas in their decisions and their avoidance of particular problems such as polygamy.

Syuan-yuan Chiou examines how the "Chinese theory" — the idea that Chinese Muslims facilitated early Islamization in Java — has been addressed, repressed, and revived, from the New Order period to the Reformation era. Questioning the reliability of the "Chinese theory" as a historical theory, Chiou focuses on the factors that formed the theory, that is, liberal Indonesian scholars' multicultural- ism, Chinese-Indonesian's ethnic empowerment, and the rise of Chi- na. The recent reemergence of the "Chinese theory" seems to be a struggle for the minority Chinese to obtain a respected position in the national history of Indonesia.

Another important aspect of social Islamization is the local- ization of Islam. Healing remains an integral part of most religions, notably Islam. Tsung-Te Tsai discusses the medical theory and prac- tice of "Islamic" healing in Java. Obviously the theories and practices Tsai explains comprise a mixture of Islamic principles with Javanese and Hindu elements. Considering that many ordinary Indonesian Muslims still frequently practice this type of traditional healing, it remains an important aspect of Islamic practice in Indonesia.

Part V deals with the long history of Islam at the local level, focusing on the Banten region since sixteenth century. Under the ongoing decentralization process, which puts a premium on the search for local identity, and under an academic trend that is increas- ingly critical of the "national history approach," an examination of the historical path dependence of Islamization in different localities will be an important issue in the foreseeable future. Ota Atsushi discusses the Islamization of Banten from the sixteenth to the nine- teenth century. He argues that the conventional wisdom that Banten had embraced orthodox Islam since the early kingdom period is a myth. Ota points out that political leaders have long attempted to reconcile "orthodox" Islam and local pre-Islamic elements, based on contemporary Javanese and Dutch sources. Abdul Hamid ex- amines the shifting political role of kyai in Banten from the New Order period to the present. Tracing kyai involvement in local poli- tics, Hamid shows that the influence of kyai steadily deteriorated during the period in discussion.

It is widely acknowledged that Indonesia has become one of the most successful democratic countries in Southeast Asia and in

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the Islamic world. This book aims to reveal the dynamism and diversity of the current thoughts and movements surrounding Indonesian Islam, as well as the hopes and challenges Indonesian democracy faces on the road to consolidation.

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HIZBUT TAHRIR INDONESIA:
THE RHETORICAL STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL *

Fahlesa Munabari

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Suharto regime on 21 May 1998 has provided Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), which literally means Liberation Party of Indonesia, with an incentive to emerge and engage in the public sphere. HTI is an Islamic revivalist group[1] that seeks to reestablish the caliphate and to implement *syariah* (Islamic law). It was not until 28 May 2000, that the group launched its first international conference on the caliphate at the Tennis Indoor Stadium in Jakarta, which was attended by hundreds of members and sympathizers. Shortly after, the group began to attract wide public attention [*Republika*, 2 June 2000]. Despite the fact that it is a relatively new Islamic group in the country's sociopolitical arena, HTI's unceasing activities as a social movement have been highly conspicuous and thus worthy of close consideration.

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[1] Esposito and Voll [2001: 39] use the term "revivalist movement" when referring to Muslim Brotherhood and a Pakistan-based Jamaat-i-Islami. Similarly, the term "Islamic revivalist group" used in this paper also refers to Islamic movements that demand such Islamic aspirations as the implementation of *syariah* and, to a larger extent, the caliphate.

There are some reasons why HTI is worth examining. First, it is a growing movement and is committed to mobilizing support. Seven years after its first public appearance, HTI held a second large-scale conference on 12 August 2007, in Bung Karno Stadium, Jakarta. Around 100,000 Muslims—most of them HTI's members and sympathizers—gathered in the conference.[2] Under the audacious slogan "It is time for the caliphate to lead the world," this conference aimed not only to raise the public awareness on the caliphate and syariah issues, but also to demonstrate the group's existence and role in the country's sociopolitical sphere.[3] Given the nature of the group that pays considerable heed to the magnitude of mass support to advance its causes, such a large public gathering is essential to solidify its footing in the country. Thus in the future it is probable that HTI will hold other subsequent international conferences with much more numerous participants than those in the two previous ones.

Second, since its emergence, HTI has been actively holding mass demonstrations. It has addressed a variety of the country's problems such as the prolonged economic crisis, the skyrocketing of fuel and commodities prices, the increase in tuition, the privatization of national assets, and so forth. However, the group does not limit itself only to socioeconomic issues, but also tackles religious ones. For instance, in concert with the other Islamic revivalist groups, the group has fully endorsed *fatwas* (Islamic decrees) issued by MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia or Indonesian Council of Ulama)[4] in July 2005 that forbade Muslims to espouse the notion of religious

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[2] This event was widely covered in both the Indonesian and foreign media. See for example, [*Reuters*, 12 August 2007; *BBC News*, 13 August 2007; *Kompas Cyber Media*, 12 August 2007].

[3] Tindiyo (local spokesperson for HTI Yogyakarta chapter), in discussion with the author, 24 March 2008.

[4] MUI was established by the representatives of Muslim scholars from all over the country on 26 July 1975, in Jakarta. It claims to be the representation of Muslim scholars in Indonesia and aims to carry Islamic *da'wah*. This council is well known for its attempts to carry out the mission of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and shunning wrongdoings) through issuing fatwas. For MUI's profile, see its website: http://www.mui.or.id/.

pluralism, secularism, and liberalization,[5] and outlawed JAI (Jamaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia or Indonesian Ahmadiyah Congregation).[6] This is evident as the group, which formed an alliance forum called FUI (Forum Umat Islam or the Forum of the Muslim Community), frequently staged street protests urging the government to disband JAI,[7] which the government eventually accommodated through a decree issued on 9 June 2008, ordering JAI to freeze its activities.[8] Although HTI was not the direct trigger for the issuance of this decree, its relentless pressure on the government through mass demonstrations in favor of JAI's dissolution helped facilitate matters.

Third, HTI claims to be an inextricable part of an international Hizbut Tahrir movement whose branches are found in many parts of the world. Consequently, it is not surprising that the group's practical policy is to a considerable extent guided by a foreign leadership [Turmudi and Sihbudi 2005: 273; Fealy 2007: 151-152]. Equally important, the group's political orientation toward the reestablishment of the caliphate, which is a transnational political entity, has been a predominant source of severe criticisms from the dominant moderate Islamic organizations in the country. The group's opponents have argued that the caliphate concept is antithetical to the very nature of Indonesia, which is a unitary nation-state. They have also labeled HTI as a group that embraces a transnational ideology, which would be tantamount to opposing Pancasila[9] [Misrawi 2007;

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[5] For elaboration of this fatwa, see Gillespie [2007]. For the analyses of another MUI's fatwas, see also Hosen [2004]

[6] Ahmadiyah is an Islamic organization established by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in Qadian Village, Punjab, India, in 1889. It later split into two groups: The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community with the current international headquarters in London, and the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. Though the adherents of these two groups hold varying views on Ahmad's teachings, the mainstream Muslims repudiate their conviction that there can be prophets after Prophet Muhammad. For detailed teachings of Ahmadiyah, see for example, Ahmad [1983]. For an account that analyzes the social and political dimensions of Ahmadiyah, see Gualtieri [2004] and Sasaki Takuo's chapter in this book.

[7] See for example, [*Tempo Interaktif*, 3 January 2008].

[8] For an account of the issuance of this decree, see International Crisis Group [2008]. See also [*Detik News*, 9 June 2008].

[9] Pancasila, which literally means five principles, is the basic ideology of the state of Indonesia. The five principles are as follows: (1) belief in one God, (2)

Abdusshomad 2008; Wahid 2008]. Being a relatively new Islamic group that is still making a great effort to project the best image for its causes, HTI, however, endeavors to counter such criticisms by convincing the public that the caliphate and syariah are indeed for the sake of the country [Yusanto 2007; 2008].

Fourth, despite claims that HTI eschews violence,[10] the group condemns the concept of democracy, considering it against Islamic teachings and therefore taboo to embrace [Zalloom 1995; Anonymous 1996: 14; Anonymous 1997: 18]. This renunciation of democracy has positioned HTI as an Islamic group that is diametrically opposed to mainstream Indonesia's Islamic organizations, e.g., Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. This stance goes so far as to reject participation in the ruling system of government, implying nonparticipation in general elections [Anonymous 1999: 31]. Yet, in striking contrast to this platform, the group's national spokesman, Muhammad Ismail Yusanto, does not rule out the possibility of HTI becoming a political party that would contest seats in future general elections [*Detik News*, 12 August 2007]. One may thus wonder whether HTI has deviated from its universal platform or this switch is part of the group's tactics to maintain its presence and activities and to cope with challenges it faces in the country's sociopolitical milieu. This paper particularly attempts to address such a puzzle.

While most accounts of HTI place considerable emphasis on the group's historical backgrounds [Rahmat 2005], structure, and platform as well as ideology [Arifin 2005; Turmudi and Riza 2005; Fealy 2007], this paper will examine particularly the group's attempts to mobilize support and to project the best image for its causes as it steadily interacts with both the ruling elites and its opponents through collective action: mass protests, public gatherings, and so forth.[11] I will start by discussing the history and emergence of HTI against the political backdrop of Suharto regime during which the

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just and civilized humanity, (3) the unity of Indonesia, (4) democracy guided by inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives, and (5) social justice for all the people of Indonesia.

[10] See for example, Arifin [2005: 337] and Fealy [2007: 152].

[11] The capability to sustain interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities constitutes an underlying feature of social movements. See Tarrow [1996: 54; 1998: 4] and Kriesi [1996: 152].

group operated surreptitiously. I will then examine the group's platform, structure, and personalities to offer a better understanding of the group. I will also analyze the group's recruitment, its media, and networking through which it attempts not only to mobilize support, but also to forge alliances with the other Islamic groups. Lastly, I will explore the group's rhetoric to account for its tactics aiming to confront unfavorable public discourses and opinions that pose a threat to its survival.

HTI's History and Emergence

Although HTI officially went public in 2000, it has actually been in existence since the beginning of 1980s. It was Abdurrahman al-Baghdadi who helped set up the group's initial cells as early as 1982. Al-Baghdadi, a Lebanese who migrated to Australia at young age, was invited by Mama Abdullah bin Nuh, an Indonesian Muslim scholar, to visit his Al-Ghazali Islamic boarding school located in Bogor city. It was during this time that Al-Baghdadi found an opportunity to recruit the group's initial members who were largely drawn from Muslim students of IPB (Institut Pertanian Bogor or Bogor Institute of Agriculture). From this university, its cells developed and spread across many other universities in Java, and it was primarily through LDK (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus or Campus Dakwah Organization), campus-based Islamic circles that have existed in virtually all big universities in Java Island since 1980s, that HTI struggled to disseminate its ideas [International Crisis Group 2003: 12; Rahmat 2005: 125; Salim 2005: 76].

The group operated clandestinely during the Suharto administration, choosing not to reveal its identity due to unfavorable political circumstances. Such a strategy was consequently applied to avoid repression. Throughout Suharto's tenure, the government applied an array of measures to preserve the status quo. In 1975, Suharto emasculated political parties by significantly reducing their numbers [Karim 1983: Chapter 5; Effendy 2003: 150]. In 1985 Suharto ordered that Pancasila be adopted as the only ideology of all political parties and mass organizations. [Ismail 1999: Chapter 3]. In addition, in a non-political sphere, in 1982 the regime issued a policy that

prohibited the wearing of headscarves for female students in public schools [Liddle 1996: 614; Effendy 2003: 161]. Such policies significantly helped relegate Islamic elements along with their political aspirations to the fringes of the country's sociopolitical scene, thereby preventing HTI and other such revivalist Islamic groups from operating publicly.

HTI remained clandestine, despite Suharto's overtures for a rapprochement with Islamic elements starting in the late 1980s. This rapprochement was evident and translated into several concrete measures such as the issuance of an education law that guaranteed religious education in the public schools in 1988; the establishment of ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia or Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association) in 1990;[12] the codification of Islamic family law aimed at arbitrating disputes concerning such matters as marriage, divorce, and inheritance in 1991; the abolition of the ban on headscarves for female students in the public schools in 1991; and the annulment of the SDSB (Sumbangan Dana Sosial Berhadiah or Social Donation with Prizes), a kind of lottery with allegedly charitable purposes, in 1993. The majority of Islamic elements benefited from this rapprochement. However, both Suharto and the Muslims seemed to have agreed that such political aspirations as the implementation of *Piagam Jakarta* (Jakarta Charter),[13] the re-embracing of

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[12] The establishment of ICMI is often celebrated as one of the most remarkable events during this rapprochement period. In its early development, ICMI ostensibly aimed not only to promote Islam, but also to develop science and technology as well as to improve the quality of human resources. Yet it was a state-promoted organization that provided many Muslim intellectuals with a quintessential stepping stone to higher political office. For a comprehensive discussion of ICMI's history, see Hefner [1993].

[13] Jakarta Charter is a term that refers to agreement among members of a panel of Indonesian founding fathers on the final draft of Indonesia's basic ideology in June 1945 after a long process of compromise. The contents of this draft were later declared to be the Indonesia's state ideology: Pancasila. However, the first article of this state ideology initially contained the following sentence: "With an obligation to follow syariah for its adherents," which was later protested by the majority of non-Muslim population in eastern Indonesia. This sentence was eventually deleted as a result of this objection and has been excluded from Pancasila. For discussions of this issue, see for example, Noer [1987: Chapter 1], Ismail [1999: Chapter 1], Romli [2006: Chapter 7], and also Abubakar Eby Hara's chapter in this book.

Islam as the primary ideology of political parties and mass organizations, and the establishment of an Islamic state would be ruled out. At this juncture, Islamic elements were given substantial leeway to play a decisive role in the public sphere insofar as they did not articulate such political issues. Thus, the mainstream Islamic ideas at that time were far from being regarded as a threat by the Suharto regime, and the main agendas of the majority of Islamic elements were aimed more at actively contributing to Suharto's development programs than at dealing with such sensitive issues as syariah and the Islamic state [Liddle 1996: 615; Van Bruinessen 2002: 134-137]. HTI was well aware, however, of the very nature of this rapprochement, and thus it is not surprising that during this period HTI did not perceive any adequate political opportunity to publicly carrying out its activities, hence its clandestine operation.

As the country democratized following the fall of Suharto regime, HTI promptly came out in the open and drew public attention by launching its first international conference on the caliphate on 28 May 2000, at the Tennis Indoor Stadium in Jakarta.[14] This conference, which was attended by hundreds of participants, featured two overseas guest speakers: Ismail al-Wahwah (Hizbut Tahrir Australia) and Sharifuddin M. Zain (Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia). Meanwhile, one of the local speakers from HTI was its leader then, Muhammad al-Khaththath. Besides publicly introducing the group, the conference aimed to convey the message that the caliphate was the only solution for dealing with multidimensional problems afflicting the entire Muslim population today. In this conference, HTI stressed that the notion of nationalism has plunged Muslims into prolonged miser-

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[14] According to the perspective of political opportunity structure, the ebb and flow of social movements is inextricably linked to political environment to which they are attached. The level of openness or closure of the polity and the state's tendency toward repression are two major dimensions of this perspective. See McAdam [1996: 27]; Tarrow [1996: 54; 1998: 4]; Porta and Diani [1999: 207]. The repressive Suharto regime was considered a major obstacle for HTI to operate openly. As the regime ended, the state's tendency toward repression significantly diminished and the level of openness gradually increased, thanks to the lofty aspirations of Indonesians toward freedom that was positively accommodated by the succeeding regime. It is against this backdrop that HTI could finally see a favorable political opportunity.

ies, dividing the Muslim world into a multitude of nation-states that consequently brings about a major obstacle to call for the unity of around 1.4 billion Muslims under one political entity [*Republika*, 2 June 2000]. This first public appearance, however, not only surprised the public, but also those who had been studying and loyally adhering to HTI's ideas. Indeed, many of its present members used to attend some study circles that taught HTI's ideas, yet they were not aware that the one organizing these study circles had been HTI.[15] This could be most likely attributed to the clandestine nature of the group during the Suharto regime when it had jealously guarded its identity.

HTI's Platform, Structure, and Personalities

As mentioned earlier, HTI is an Indonesian branch of the international Hizbut Tahrir (HT) movement.[16] Equally important, HT exacts strict compliance with its ideology and administrative law from its branches all around the world [Farouki 1996: 132-145; Rosenau 2007: 90]. It is therefore deemed necessary to discuss the history and features of HT, which will in turn help us better understand the organization. We will later find that the examination of HT runs parallel with that of HTI.

HT is a self-proclaimed international political party established in Al-Quds, Jerusalem, in 1953 by an Islamic scholar, Taqiuddin an-Nabhani (1905-1978). An-Nabhani, a Palestinian, went to Egypt in the early 1940s to study at the Al-Azhar University. After graduation, he returned home and served as a judge in an Islamic court as well as a religion teacher in Ibrahimiya High School. He seemed to have been displeased with the Israeli occupation of his motherland and initially suggested how to liberate it, without mentioning the establishment of an Islamic state as a solution. Nevertheless, his later focus was no not only on Palestine: in an attempt to restore

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[15] Abdullah (local spokesman for HTI Central Java chapter), in discussion with the author, 20 March 2008. See also [Fealy 2007: 155].

[16] To avoid confusion, the Indonesian branch of Hizbut Tahrir is referred to as "HTI," while "HT" is used to refer to the international Hizbut Tahrir movement.

the unity of Islamic states, an-Nabhani went so far as to advocate the reestablishment of the caliphate, which had been officially dissolved on 3 March 1924,[17] soon after the Republic of Turkey under the leadership of Ataturk was declared [Jansen 1979: 151; Commins 1991: 195].

The resumption of the Islamic way of life and promulgation of Islamic teachings (da'wah) serves as HT's general objectives. The group believes that in order to put these objectives into effect, the agenda of restoring the caliphate is of paramount importance. In addition to this, HT is committed to changing the situation of a corrupt society whose way of life, according to the group, has been heavily contaminated with such non-Islamic ideas as democracy, nationalism, secularism, and capitalism, into an Islamic society. It is through da'wah activities that this commitment is translated into action, and the group claims to have derived its da'wah method from that applied by Prophet Muhammad during his prophethood, comprising three gradual stages as follows:[18] (1) cultivating recruits who believe in the idea and the method of the group; (2) interaction with *umma*, to have the umma embrace and carry Islam so that umma takes it up as its issue, and thus works to establish it in the affairs of life; and (3) establishing the caliphate, implementing Islam generally and comprehensively, and carrying it as a message to the world.

HT is, however, still grappling with the second stage, for the ultimate objective—reestablishing the caliphate—to date remains unattainable. It is worth noting that HT employs the concept of *tholabun nusroh* (seeking protection) to help propel the group toward the reestablishment of the caliphate. According to this concept, HT necessitates giving a *bai'ah* (pledge of allegiance) to a certain leading figure who holds power or will most likely hold power in the near future. This is evident as HT sent delegations to meet with Ayatollah Khomeini in Paris on the eve of the Iranian Revolution, asking Iran's spiritual leader to be a caliph on condition that he agree with HT's proposed concept of the caliphate. This lobbying ended

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[17] For the history of the last period of Ottoman Empire, see for example, Palmer [1992].

[18] Hizb ut-Tahrir, "Definition," http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/index.php/EN/def (accessed 2 December 2007).

in failure because Khomeini did not adequately respond to this offer, which was most likely due to a different understanding of the concept of Islamic leadership between him and HT [Farouki 1996: 31; Abedin 2004a: 10]. Though this attempt was a complete failure, HT seems to have been consistent in seeking a potential caliph to whom it can give a bai'ah. Furthermore, in the mid-1990s, HT attempted yet again to seek protection by persuading Mullah Omar, Afghanistan's erstwhile de facto head of state, to accept its offer of the caliph position. But this also ended fruitlessly because Mullah Omar was only interested in being a leader of Afghanistan and not a leader of the global caliphate, which naturally opposes the division of Muslim lands into many nation-states.[19]

Some analysts claim that HT embraces a violent ideology and therefore poses a potent threat to American interests in the world [Cohen 2003: 1; Baran 2005: 2]. The Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG) prefers to consider HT's nonviolent posture as not absolute [ICG 2003: 43]. In contrast, other analysts maintain that despite the group's virulent rhetoric and hostile posture against the West,[20] HT remains untarnished by violence [Sethre 2003: 108; Wishnick 2004: 8; Mayer 2004: 22; Akbarzadeh 2004a: 274, 2004b: 698; Farrar 2006: 108; Grodsky 2007: 108]. It is also safe from being classified as a terrorist group according to the U.S. Department of State's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations released in October 2005.[21]

As for HTI, despite its virulent critique of the United States and its allies, there has been no evidence that the group employs violent methods to advance its political interests. To deliver its messages, in addition to the group's media, HTI relies on mass demonstrations, and thus far the group seems committed to ensuring that its mass actions are nonviolent.[22]

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[19] Abdullah (local spokesman for HTI Central Java chapter), in discussion with the author, 20 March 2008.

[20] HT views the clash of civilization between Islam and the West as inevitable. See Anonymous [2002].

[21] U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/37191.htm (accessed 14 October 2007).

[22] This argument is in agreement with that of scholars who also conducted research on HTI such as Arifin [2005: 337] and Fealy [2007: 152].

While Karagiannis [2006a; 2006b] argues that HT's financial resources, albeit solid, are a matter of speculation, Cohen [1982: 223] and Farouki [1996: 130-132] believe that the group largely derives its financial sources from membership donations. The latter judgment was confirmed by Muhammad Ismail Yusanto of HTI.[23] An internal source mentioned that in addition to membership donations, the group also benefits from the sale of its books, magazines, tabloids, and merchandise. Furthermore, the group may receive financial support from nonmembers on condition that they can demonstrate that they voluntarily espouse HT ideas. However, this financial support must be unconditional and directly approved by the group's supreme leader. HT referred to this type of people/donors as *mu'ayyid* (supporter).[24]

HT has a top-down hierarchical structure.[25] As a result, some analysts have portrayed the group as totalitarian, resembling a Marxist-Leninist party [Cohen 2003: 3; Baran 2004: xi; Baran 2005: 1].[26] However, Farouki [1996: 114] believes that maintaining the uniformity of the group's platform is the *raison d'être* of such a structure [Farouki 1996: 114]. The highest structure of the group is called the leadership committee (*al-lajnah al-qiyadah*), which is headed by the supreme leader called *amir*. This committee holds the authority to lead the group and to monitor its overall progress. An-Nabhani was the founder as well as the first amir of HT, and his leadership ended with his death on 20 June 1977. An-Nabhani was succeeded by Abdul Qadim Zallum, who had been there at the beginning and had worked closely with an-Nabhani to build up the group. Soon after

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[23] Muhammad Ismail Yusanto (HTI national spokesman), in discussion with the author, 12 March 2008.

[24] Abdullah (local spokesperson for HTI Central Java chapter), in discussion with the author, 20 March 2008; Tindiyo (local spokesman for HTI Yogyakarta chapter, in discussion with the author, 24 March 2008.

[25] For a figure of HT structure, see Farouki [1996: 116].

[26] Yusanto refutes such a Marxist-Leninist label, saying it was fallacious. He holds that an organization with a top-down hierarchical structure cannot be exclusively associated with a Marxist-Leninist party. To support his argument, Yusanto gives an example of the military, an organization with a top-down hierarchical structure, yet its structure that is not based on that of a Marxist-Leninist party. See Yusanto [2008].

Zallum died, Ata Abu Rashta, former spokesman for HT Jordanian branch, assumed the leadership on 13 April 2003, and is the current amir.[27] The group claims that such a succession model in which amir has a lifetime tenure once he is appointed follows the one applied in the period of the Rashidin Caliphs.[28]

Under the leadership committee is a provincial committee (*al-lajnah al-wilayah*) led by a man referred to as *mu'tamad*. The term *al-wilayah* (province) in this context, however, denotes a sphere of operation at the nation-state level [Farouki 1996: Chapter 4]. Accordingly, HT branches such as those in Indonesia, Malaysia, Britain, Australia, Sudan, Palestine, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and so on, are referred to as HT provincial branches, and the provincial committee is normally located in the capital of each state. This committee consists of five to ten members who are responsible for anything related to the group's affairs within the scope of a province (al-wilayah). These members are elected, and all HT members have the right to participate in a direct election of the committee in the province in which they dwell. As for the mu'tamad, he is nevertheless always directly appointed by amir for reasons of maintaining firm control on the provincial committee members [*ibid*.]. The mu'tamad thus exercises considerable authority over the provincial committee members. This committee represents the leadership group in the provincial area in which it operates, and its position is so strategic that success or failure in this area relies heavily on its active role. It is compulsory for each HT provincial committee to directly report all of their activities to the leadership committee, which is mainly done through the Internet. In addition, communication between HT provincial committees is considered unnecessary and in fact not permitted [Rahmat 2005: 63].

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[27] Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, "Atha Abu Ar-Rasytah, Amir Hizbut Tahrir Saat Ini," http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2007/05/20/atha-abu-ar-rasythah-amir-hizbut-tahrir-saat-ini/ (accessed 22 July 2008).

[28] The Rashidin Caliphs, which literally means the rightly guided caliphs (632-661 AD.), refers to a period of an Islamic leadership after the death of Prophet Muhammad. In total, there were four caliphs during this period: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, all of whom were the Prophet's faithful companions. For the history of the Rashidin Caliphs and the early expansion of Islam, see for example, Muir [1963] and Madelung [1997].

While the office location of each provincial committee is clear, the location of HT headquarters (the leadership committee) has been one of the most contentious issues to emerge in research on the group. Many posit that London serves as its base [Cohen 2003: 1; Akbarzadeh 2004a: 275; 2004b: 698; Ayoob 2005: 83; Adamson 2005: 562; Karagiannis 2006a: 266], while Jordan is, too, claimed to be its headquarters [Baran 2004: ix]. During its initial phase, HT headquarters, however, moved from one country to another. These shifts should come as no surprise given that in many Middle East countries most HT branches had been illegal and under tight surveillance to the extent that it needed to locate its headquarters in a secure place. Despite disagreement over the headquarters' location, it is important to note that Farouki [1996: 115] had the impression that the leadership committee, which during al-Nabhani's life consisted of several men, was disbanded, and its functions were thus solely carried out by the amir. Nevertheless it is not clear as to whether this leadership committee has been restored. What is clear is that London is by no means the HT headquarters: it is merely a provincial branch (al-lajnah al-wilayah) of HT that has the same position as the other HT branches such as Hizbut Tahrir Australia, Hizbut Tahrir Yemen, Hizbut Tahrir Sudan, and so on. This can be attributed to the fact that in early 1996, Omar Bakri Muhammad,[29] erstwhile leader of HT Britain, said that he had been forced by the leadership committee in the Middle East to quit the group due to his alleged deviation from HT's policy [Farouki 2000: 30-31]. Bakri's statement thus obviously implies that the leadership committee is located in the Middle East. As for Jordan, it is largely believed to be the traditional stronghold of HT, and it is most likely on account of this premise that this country is accordingly claimed to be the group's headquarters. However, considering that the amir exercises supreme authority over the group and that the leadership committee previously comprising several men was disbanded, the question of HT headquarters' location no longer seems significant. This is because, regardless of where the group's amir resides, he can readily stay in touch with and give instructions to his trusted men in HT

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[29] For a profile of Omar Bakri Muhammad and his early attempts to set up Hizbut Tahrir Britain, see Abedin [2004b].

branches all around the world through the internet.

Below the provincial committee is a local committee (*al-lajnah al-mahalliyah*) that consists of five people, including its head referred to as *naqib* [Farouki 1996: 123]. This local committee is established by the provincial committee in each urban center. The local committee offices of HTI are accordingly located in the capitals of Indonesian provinces. HTI claims to have successfully established its local committees in virtually all the country's provinces. They are present in such regions as Java, which is considered the group's stronghold; Madura; Bali; Sumatera, including Riau Islands and Batam; Sulawesi; Nusa Tenggara; Maluku; Kalimantan; and the very eastern part of the country, Papua.[30] The naqib is responsible for regularly sending reports on the group's activities in his area to the provincial committee and for supervising study circles (*halaqah*), which constitute the smallest unit of HT structure. This study circle is headed by *mushrif* and consists of five members or novices (*daaris*). The primary task of mushrif is to ensure the smooth knowledge transfer of HT literature to the novices [Farouki 1996: 123-124].

The current mu'tamad of HTI is Hafidz Abdurrahman (b. 1971). He is a master's graduate of Malaya University majoring in Islamic studies and has a Nahdlatul Ulama background [*Jawa Pos*, 6 April 2006]. Before Abdurrahman assumed the leadership in 2004, the mu'tamad position was held by Muhammad al-Khaththath (b. 1964). While pursuing his agriculture degree at Bogor Agriculture Institute from which he graduated, he learned about Islamic subjects in a number of Islamic boarding schools such as Al-Ihya, Darut Tafsir, and Al-Ghifari. In 2005, in concert with the other Muslim figures, he set up an alliance forum called FUI, which will be discussed later.[31] Despite the fact that he is one of the first HTI generations, his career in the group was finished in August 2008 as he was expelled by the amir following the Monas Incident, which will be explained later as we discuss FUI.

The third HTI personality is Muhammad Ismail Yusanto (b.

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[30] For the list of HTI chapters along with their contact persons, see *Al-Wa'ie* magazine. This list can be found on the cover page of this monthly magazine.

[31] Muhammad al-Khaththath (former HTI leader), in discussion with the author, 12 March 2008.

1962), the group's national spokesman, whose position ensures greater media coverage than the other HTI personalities. He obtained his undergraduate degree in geology from Gadjah Mada University in 1988, and achieved his master's degree in management from the Institute of Indonesian Entrepreneur Development, Jakarta, in 2000. Like al-Khaththath, Yusanto also learned about Islamic subjects at young age in several Islamic boarding schools such as Budi Mulia and Krapyak in Yogyakarta, and Ulil Albab in Bogor.[32]

Both al-Khaththath and Yusanto serve as the committee members of MUI for the period 2005-2010. While Yusanto holds a position as vice chairman of the Commission of Research whose main tasks are to conduct research concerning Islamic issues and to give research-based suggestions to the general committee for the purpose of issuing fatwas, al-Khaththath, although he currently no longer represents HTI, serves as vice secretary of the Preaching Commission with the goal of spreading da'wah all around the country.[33] The Commission of Research has a pivotal role, for according to MUI's procedure, any fatwa issued by the council must firstly be examined by this commission [*Antara*, 11 June 2007]. However, though HTI currently has Yusanto in MUI, through which it attempts to advance its political interests, it is safe to argue that the group's role and influence in the council is at best narrow. This is attributed to the fact that MUI's committee members comprise a variety of ulamas whose backgrounds are so diverse that Yusanto alone can hardly sway the other members.

HTI's Recruitment, Media, and Networking

Upon its first public appearance in May 2000, HTI gained considerable confidence in holding various open discussions on Islamic issues not only in mosques, but also in such venues as seminar halls and campuses. In campuses, which constitute one of the group's major

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[32] Muhammad Ismail Yusanto (HTI national spokesman), in discussion with the author, 12 March 2008.

[33] Majelis Ulama Indonesia, "Susunan Pengurus Lengkap MUI Periode 2005-2010," http://www.mui.or.id/mui_in/about.php?id=16 (accessed 4 August 2008).

venues for finding new recruits, HTI set up a campus-based group named Gema Pembebasan (Gerakan Mahasiswa Pembebasan or the Students Movement of Liberation) on 28 February 2004, at the University of Indonesia.[34] Despite the fact that Gema Pembebasan is a campus-based political wing of HTI, the former seems to avoid mentioning any association with the latter. Gema Pembebasan's written vision does not mention any words of the caliphate, let alone syariah: it simply states that it seeks to make Islam the mainstream ideology of student movements in the country.[35] Such a tactic is applied on the grounds that in some campuses, the presence of HTI has met with strong resistance from some student movements that condemn its ardent aspirations to the implementation of the caliphate and syariah. Gema Pembebasan is therefore needed to help HTI overcome such resistance. Among student movements in campuses, Gema Pembebasan, accordingly, is a relatively new movement, which inescapably competes for student support with such already existing movements as HMI (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam or Islamic Students' Association), KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia or United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students), PMII (Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia or Indonesian Muslim Students Movement), and so on.

To augment its members and supporters, and in addition to HTI members' personal networks, the group relies on the aforementioned open discussions. In such discussions, participants who are curious about the group and its ideas are invited by the group's members to participate in a small, albeit intensive, study circle, which consists of several novices. This study circle takes place in a private house and is led by the mushrif, whose main task is to help novices internalize HTI principles. This internalization process necessitates students memorizing the contents of the group's fundamental literature authored by an-Nabhani such as *Nizham ul-Islam* (The System of Islam), *Mafahim* (The Concepts of Hizb ut-Tahrir), and *Attakatul al-Hizbi* (Structuring of a Party). For novices to become members,

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[34] For a detailed profile of Gema Pembebasan, see its website: http://www.gemapembebasan.or.id/.

[35] Gema Pembebasan, "Profil Singkat," http://www.gemapembebasan.or.id/?pilih=hal&id=4 (accessed 19 August 2008).

it normally takes several years after they become well versed in this literature. This was confirmed by a rank-and-file HTI member who in fact had needed around five years to move up from novice to member. There is, however, no specified length of time for this promotion, for it mostly depends on the novices' capacity to both internalize and implement the group's basic principles, which is thoroughly assessed by their mushrif.[36] Furthermore, when it comes to HTI members, the group takes the view that quality must take precedence over quantity.[37] For HTI, which emphasizes the uniformity of its ideology, such a training culture is nevertheless necessary to ensure that its members are highly knowledgeable about the group's principles.

HTI certainly realizes the effectiveness of the media's role in today's world. Accordingly, to massively facilitate the dissemination of its ideas, the group regularly publishes such media as bulletins, magazines, and tabloids. Even during the group's clandestine period, it had regularly published a bulletin under different names in different provinces. For example, despite the uniformity of its contents, the group's former bulletin circulated in Central Java Province was named *Al-Misykah* (lantern), while that in Yogyakarta Province was called *Al-Miqyas* (scale).[38] Such a strategy undoubtedly aimed to ensure the group's survival in the unfavorable political atmosphere under the repressive Suharto regime. The group's current bulletin is called *Al-Islam*, issued weekly and mainly distributed to mosques during Friday prayers. *Al-Islam* was published not long after the group's first public appearance in May 2000, thus rendering the already mentioned previous bulletins obsolete. While *Al-Islam* is primarily aimed at mosques' attendants, *Al-Wa'ie*, the group's magazine that literally means "awareness," is distributed monthly and aimed at broader market segments. The group's third media, which was launched in November 2008, is a biweekly tabloid, called *Media Umat*.

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[36] Dendy (HTI rank-and-file member), in discussion with the author, 23 October 2008. See also [Arifin 2005: 155-165].

[37] Budiyanto (local spokesman for HTI South Sumatra chapter), in discussion with the author, 7 March 2008.

[38] Abdullah (local spokesman for HTI Central Java chapter), in discussion with the author, 20 March 2008.

The contents of these three media primarily exhibit the group's views on not only Islamic issues, but also various sociopolitical aspects of Indonesia. They are also used to convey the group's criticisms against such issues as the skyrocketing of fuel and commodity prices, the privatization of national companies, the country's acute corruption problems, and so forth. In addition to these print media, HTI owns a well-maintained official website, thus enabling the public to become familiar with the group's platform.[39]

HTI also enthusiastically attempts to establish relationships with many radio stations through which it seizes opportunities to participate in talk-show programs on a regular basis. For example, HTI South Sumatra chapter is granted slots to deliver Islamic lectures in several radio stations such as Oz FM, Real FM, and Indralaya FM.[40] In Yogyakarta, the group used to maintain an on-air program every Saturday evening called "Tanya Ustadz," which literally means "asking Muslim teachers questions," in a local favorite radio station called Unisi FM. The program invited radio listeners to ask any questions regarding Islamic issues to the interviewees comprising some HTI's senior members. These interviewees had also been given leeway by the radio station manager to decide on the weekly topics for discussion. Unfortunately, this program ended around 2005 because of the shift in the radio station's market.

But this would not be the end of the story, for the group later obtained a new radio slot on Arma 11 radio station. Though HTI cannot deny that many radio listeners are annoyed by its extreme stance against capitalism, secularism, democracy, nationalism, and other such ideas that the group considers flawed, this sort of radio slots certainly aids HTI in attracting as many curious people as possible to hear of its ideas.[41]

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[39] See HTI's official website on http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/. In addition, one of the group's leading figures as well as a member of the provincial committee (al-lajnah al-wilayah), Muhamaad Shiddiq al-Jawi, maintains a well-updated personal website that also contains enormous information about the group's ideas, which is accessible on http://www.khilafah1924.org/.

[40] Budiyanto (local spokesman for HTI South Sumatra chapter), in discussion with the author, 7 March 2008.

[41] Tindiyo (local spokesman for HTI Yogyakarta chapter), in discussion with the author, 24 March 2008.

With regard to HTI's readiness to cooperate with other Islamic groups, an argument by Turmudi and Sihbudi [2005: 278], which suggested that HTI seems to refrain from being an exclusive group, was indeed substantiated. The group did attempt to form an alliance with the other Islamic elements. To this end, it established an alliance forum called FUI. The history of FUI began when MUI held the fourth congress of KUII (Kongres Umat Islam Indonesia or the Congress of Indonesian Muslims) on 17-21 April 2005, which was attended by all MUI members, members of various Islamic organizations, and leaders of Islamic boarding schools as well as Islamic universities. At the end of the congress and as part of its declarations, all participants agreed on the need to implement syariah in the country. The congress then instructed a group of ulamas to form a special committee to implement this declaration. In a follow-up meeting held in May 2005, these ulamas reached an agreement to establish FUI, whose primary objectives were to facilitate communication and exchange of information among Islamic organizations, to hold training programs on Islamic subjects (*dauroh*) for Muslim cadres, and to respond to actual issues concerning Islam both at the national and international levels.[42] Mashadi from KISDI (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam or the Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Islamic World) was chosen as the forum's leader, while Muhammad al-Khaththath was selected to serve as a general secretary. Al-Khaththath claims that FUI members come from virtually all Islamic organizations as well as Islamic parties.

However, in reality, not all of them are active. In fact, the two biggest Islamic organizations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, are inactive. This is also the case for Islamic parties. Among the active member organizations are FPI (Front Pembela Islam or the Defenders' Front of Islam), MMI (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia or Islamic Mujahidin (Holy Warrior) Council), Misi Islam (Islamic Mission), Al-Ittihadiyah, Al-Irsyad, Gerakan Persaudaraan Muslim (Muslim Brotherhood Movement), As-Syafiiah, Al-Azhar, Persis (Persatuan Islam or Islamic Unity), TPM (Tim Pengacara Muslim

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[42] Muhammad al-Khaththath (former HTI leader), in discussion with the author, 12 March 2008.

or the Team of Muslim Lawyers), and some others. As for HTI, it had been a member of FUI since its inception, yet it decided to withdraw from this forum around August 2008,[43] for reasons to be explained shortly.

All of these member organizations might have differing organizational and ideological features from each other: not all of them are hardliners. However, they certainly agree to forge their relations and coordination with each other for the sake of da'wah activities. To broadcast its aspirations and activities to the public, the forum publishes a fortnightly tabloid called *Suara Islam* (the Voice of Islam) in which al-Khaththath served as a general manager and thus played a leading role in laying a solid foundation for the tabloid's contents and editorial policy. Yusanto served as the tabloid's senior editor. One of issues raised by this tabloid was the privatization of national companies, which was on its front page, entitled "Penjajahan Lewat Investasi" (Colonization through Investment), which strongly condemned the government for backing such privatization [*Suara Islam*, 2007: 6-9]. Such an antiprivatization posture is undoubtedly one of major issues frequently raised by HTI not only through its media, but also in its demonstrations.[44]

In addition to this tabloid, the aforementioned training programs aimed at the cadres of FUI's member organizations have undoubtedly provided HTI with substantial opportunities to disseminate its ideas. Hafidz Abdurrahman was one of HTI's personalities who have participated in such training programs as a speaker, giving a presentation on the Islamic syariah.[45]

HTI's affiliation with FUI, however, lasted for only three years as the amir ordered the group to cut ties with the forum around August 2008 and, at the same time, expelled al-Khaththath from HTI, on account of the Monas Incident on 1 June 2008.[46] In this

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[43] Tindiyo (local spokesman for HTI Yogyakarta chapter, in discussion with the author, 24 October 2008.

[44] For example, see *Al-Wa'ie* [March 2008a: 9-13] that raised the issue of privatization, which is strongly chastised by the group, with a headline: "Perampokan Harta Negara" [The Robbery of the Country's Wealth].

[45] Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, "Materi Ustads Hafidz Abdurrahman di Dauroh Tokoh FUI," http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/downloads/ (accessed 22 August 2008).

[46] Muhammad al-Khaththath (former HTI leader), in discussion with the au-

incident, KLI (Komando Laskar Islam or Islamic Force Command), which claimed to be an alliance group consisting of several Islamic militias (*laskars*), was involved in a violent attack on AKKBB (Aliansi Kebangsaan untuk Kebebasan Beragama dan Berkeyakinan, or the National Alliance for Freedom of Religion and Faith) as it commemorated the birth of Pancasila in the vicinity of the National Monument in Jakarta [*Kompas Cyber Media*, 2 June 2008]. KLI claimed to have been provoked into an attack as AKKBB was protesting against the developing demands for disbanding JAI, which was loudly expressed by FPI, MMI, HTI, and FUI [*Detik News*, 3 June 2008]. In the national media, KLI was closely associated with FPI due to the fact that virtually all attackers obviously exhibited FPI's symbols. However, KLI's commander, Munarman, insisted that it was his group that was fully responsible for the attack, not FPI [*Detik News*, 2 June 2008]. Munarman, the FPI leader, Habib Rizieq, and FPI members involved in the incident were soon arrested. Both Munarman and Rizieq were convicted of inducing his followers to attack AKKBB and were sentenced to 1.6 years in jail [*Kompas Cyber Media*, 30 October 2008a; 30 October 2008b].

It is worth mentioning that before the incident, according to al-Khaththath, HTI and KLI initially held a joint demonstration against the government's decision to raise fuel prices and marched to the Presidential Palace. However, KLI later split from the march and went to the National Monument as it found out that AKKBB was staging a protest there.[47] In addition, Munarman, a well-known legal activist, had a close relationship with HTI in a sense that he was an HTI novice.[48] Yet Yusanto denied that Munarman had any association with HTI and said that he was a chairman of FPI's advocacy team [*Tempo Interaktif*, 1 June 2008].

It is, however, essential to understand why Yusanto made such a disavowal despite undeniable Munarman's association with HTI

thor, 25 October 2008.

[47] Muhammad al-Khaththath (former HTI leader), in discussion with the author, 4 June 2008. See also [*Detik News*, 3 June 2008]. For comparison, see [*Jakarta Post*, 2 June 2008].

[48] Budiyanto (local spokesman for HTI South Sumatra chapter), in discussion with the author, 4 June 2008; Muhammad al-Khaththath (former HTI leader), in discussion with the author, 25 October 2008.

as a novice [*Ibid*.]. First, as HTI spokesman, Yusanto must be responsible for safeguarding the group's nonviolent image that he has been projecting since the group's emergence. Second, it would be suicidal for HTI had Yusanto confirmed Munarman's undeniable association with the group. Meanwhile, al-Khaththath who, shortly after leaving HTI set up a new group named Hizb Dakwah Islam whose principles are more or less the same as HTI's, believed that the reason behind the amir's order for HTI to sever ties with FUI is fear that the latter would impair the nonviolent image of the former. Yet he disagreed with such a decision and opted to side with FUI.[49] In addition, he argued that an International Crisis Group report entitled "Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree," which pointed out that HTI and FPI were the main elements in FUI, also played a part in the issuance of this decision [ICG 2008: 3].[50] Nevertheless, he did not clarify to what extent this report led to the issuance of amir's order.

It was, however, not the fact that HTI was the main element in FUI that occasioned the end of the former's affiliation with the latter. Indeed, every HTI member is strongly encouraged to exert influence on any environment in which they are present, aiming to both spread its very principles as widely as possible and, most importantly, to mobilize support for its causes. The amir's fear that HTI's affiliation with FUI could hurt its nonviolent image, as al-Khaththath has suggested, is presumably attributable to the violent image of FPI, which is one of the main elements in FUI. The incarceration of the FPI's leader, Habib Rizieq, in connection with the Monas Incident, has undeniably added to FPI's long record of violence,[51] which does imperil FUI, whose nonviolent image has been projected by al-Khaththath. This would in turn have a negative effect on HTI's image as a nonviolent group because it is also a major element in FUI. Thus, cutting ties with FUI is most likely

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[49] Muhammad al-Khaththath (former HTI leader), in discussion with the author, 25 October 2008.

[50] Muhammad al-Khaththath (former HTI leader), in discussion with the author, 25 October 2008..

[51] For a detailed account of FPI, see Ng [2006]. See also [Van Bruinessen 2002: 148; Hasan 2006: 14-16; Umam 2006: 10].

HTI's exit strategy from any association with FPI.

During HTI's affiliation with FUI, the former actually made an effort to impart the principles of nonviolent approaches to FPI members through a number of FUI training programs set up by al-Khaththath. However, this effort fell short of expectations, and HTI found it too tough to guarantee that FPI members would eschew violence, as shown in the Monas Incident. This could be attributed to the fact that, unlike HTI, FPI does not take a clear stance on whether or not to renounce violence [*Ibid.*].

HTI's Rhetorical Tactics

The Caliphate and Syariah as Frames

To demonstrate its concern about Indonesia's socioeconomic problems, HTI frequently stages demonstrations to criticize such issues as the prolonged economic crisis; subsidy cuts in such fundamental sectors as energy, education, and agriculture; and the privatization of national companies. For example, in an article entitled "HTI Demo Kedubes AS: Rice Datang Cepu Melayang" (HTI Stages Demonstration in Front of U.S. Embassy: Rice Comes, Cepu Gone), the group condemned the visit of Condoleezza Rice to Indonesia, arguing that her visit was aimed at pressuring the government to cede the exploitation control of Cepu Block, an oil-rich area in Central Java Island, to a U.S.-owned Exxon Mobile Corporation [*Detik News*, 15 March 2006].

In another article entitled "Demo, Hizbut Tahrir Tolak Kenaikan BBM" (Demonstration, Hizbut Tahrir Rejects Gasoline Price Hikes), HTI roundly criticized the government's decision to increase gasoline prices on the grounds that it would consequently aggravate the country's poverty [*Kompas Cyber News*, 13 May 2008]. Moreover, the group also targeted the government's failure to provide the public with affordable education following the significant subsidy cuts in an education sector as reported in an article entitled "HTI: Pendidikan Indonesia Sama Seperti Zaman Pra-Kemerdekaan" (HTI: The Situation of Present Indonesian Education is Not Different from That of Pre-Independence Era) [*Detik News*, 16 August 2004].

These are only few examples of issues frequently raised by HTI. The group mainly raises such issues through mass demonstrations, which function as one of the group's major action instruments in the country's public sphere. To address all such problems, HTI offers the caliphate and syariah as the solutions.[52] The caliphate and syariah thus function as the group's major frames, which help the group construct its image.

One may argue that the idea of the caliphate is new in Indonesia, which has been relentlessly voiced by HTI since its first public appearance. Yet this is not the case for syariah aspirations. The idea that syariah should be implemented at the state level, in fact, dates back to the very beginning of Indonesia's history as some of the country's founding fathers sought to formulate a state ideology that was based on syariah. However, such attempts eventually resulted in failure.[53] In contemporary Indonesia, HTI is by no means the only Islamic element that espouses syariah implementation, for there are some other Islamic groups such as MMI and FPI, as well as Islamic political parties such as PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or United Development Party) and PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang or Crescent Star Party) that also advocate this very idea [Baswedan 2004]. Nevertheless, HTI has unquestionably become the only Islamic group exclusively associated with the caliphate frame, and because of this the group has inevitably met with strong resistance from some of its opponents vehemently opposed to this vision. HTI's opponents hold that the ultimate form of government for Indonesia—the unitary state and the republic—has been achieved. Some of these opponents include Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which have long been recognized as moderate Islamic organizations.

However, it is worth noting that although Muhammadiyah officially disagrees with the caliphate concept, its leader, Din Syamsuddin, has a friendly attitude toward HTI in a sense that he lets the group work for the reestablishment of the caliphate insofar as it rules out

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[52] See for example, Yusanto [2007; 2008].

[53] For discussions on how Indonesia's founding fathers and early national figures were involved in intense struggles for formulating the state ideology, see for example, [Ismail 1999: Chapter 1; Noer 1987: Chapter 1].

the use of violence.[54] In fact, Syamsuddin accepted HTI's invitation to become a guest speaker in its international conference on the caliphate on 12 August 2007, in Jakarta [*Lampung Post*, 12 August 2007].

In contrast to Syamsuddin, the Nahdlatul Ulama leader, Hasyim Muzadi, was deliberately absent from the conference, citing the fundamental differences between his organization and HTI: the former maintains that it forever stands for Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia), while the latter seeks to reestablish the transnational caliphate [*NU Online*, 6 July 2007].

Another Nahdlatul Ulama leading figure that expresses his disapproval of the caliphate concept is Solahudin Wahid, a brother of former President Abdurrahman Wahid. In an article entitled "NU dan Khilafah Islamiyah" (Nahdlatul Ulama and Islamic Caliphate), he contended that Muzadi ever urged the government to disband HTI (Wahid 2008). Wahid then argued that the nature of the caliphate is diametrically opposed to the very foundation of Indonesia, which is anchored in Pancasila.

Equally strong criticisms of the caliphate also come from other Nahdlatul Ulama figures. For instance, in an article entitled "NU Vis-à-vis Transnationalisme" (NU Vis-à-vis Transnationalism), Muhyiddin Abdusshomad, a director of Nurul Islam boarding school, Jember, showed strong disapproval of the caliphate, which he regards as a transnational political entity that is not suitable for Indonesia [Abdusshomad 2008]. Furthermore, in an article entitled "Rethinking Khilafah" (Rethinking Caliphate), Zuhairi Misrawi, a Nahdlatul Ulama intellectual as well as director of the Moderate Muslim Society,[55] commented that the caliphate is not an ideal type of state because its history shows that it is prone to corruption and collusion. He added that in Islam there is no instruction to establish such a state [Misrawi 2007].

In its attempts to put the caliphate and syariah frames into

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[54] Din Syamsuddin, in discussion with the author, 4 July 2008.

[55] The Moderate Muslim Society was established in 2005 by some young Muslims affiliated with Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. It is an organization committed to advocating moderate interpretation and implementation of Islamic teachings. For more details of this organization, see its website: http://www.moderatemuslim.net/

practice within the sociopolitical milieu of Indonesia, HTI needs to project its best image for its causes not only to mobilize support, but also to counter the aforementioned criticisms of the caliphate concept and to maintain its presence in the country.[56] To this end, HTI employs rhetorical tactics aimed at convincing both the government and the public that it works for the sake of Indonesia.

Here we will examine how the group exploits such tactics. According to Yusanto, the way the group exhibits its love for the country, which is tantamount to exhibiting its sense of nationalism,[57] is through constructive criticisms to the government as borne out by a large number of issues it has been addressing such as those regarding capital investment, education, separatism, and so on. With respect to capital investment, HTI takes a firm stance against it, maintaining that the privatization of the country's national companies will only give away the country's resources.

One of the privatization issues the group has raised was that of an attempt to privatize PLN (Perusahaan Listrik Negara or the National Electricity Company), which HTI strongly rejected, arguing that PLN's privatization would inevitably increase electricity prices and thus exacerbate the middle-income sector's financial burdens [Al-Wa'ie, March 2008b: 23-25]. By raising such an issue, HTI attempts to send a message to the public that it is concerned about the financial difficulties afflicting the middle-income segment of the country, thus justifying its claim that it works for nationalistic causes—for the sake of Indonesia and its people. However, such an antiprivatization posture is not attributable to HTI's nationalistic attachment to Indonesia, but rather its strict adherence to its very principles, which forbid taking advantage of foreign capital. This is

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[56] The perspective of framing has it that the success or failure of social movements is not only dependent on political circumstances in an environment to which they are attached, nor is it merely reliant on their ability to mobilize the masses to stage protests in the streets. Indeed, to boost the political impact of their attempts, social movements need to engage in meaning contestation with their opponents by constructing perceptions, images, and metaphors of the situation that facilitate the implementation of their objectives. See [McCarthy et al. 1996: 292; Zald 1996: 265; McAdam 1996: 341].

[57] Nationalism can be understood as a sense of belonging that people have to their nation-state. See for example, Smith [2004: 5].

clearly stated in article 161 of the draft constitution for the caliphate.

> The use of foreign capital and its investment within the State is forbidden. It is also prohibited to grant franchises to foreigners [an-Nabhani 2002: 157].

HTI is also committed to warning the government against separatism. This is evident as the group frequently raises issues on separatist attempts to separate Papua and Maluku from Indonesia. For instance, in an article entitled "Jangan Lepaskan Papua [Don't Detach Papua]," the group vehemently condemned an event of Kongres Rakyat Papua (Papuan People Congress) held from 29 May to 4 June 2000, which rejected Papua's integration into Indonesia and claimed that the island has been independent since 1 December 1961 [*Al-Islam*, 2000]. Likewise, the group also decried separatist attempts made by Front Kedaulatan Maluku (Maluku Sovereignty Front), which raised the flag of RMS (Republik Maluku Selatan or the Republic of South Moluccas) in Ambon on 25 April 2002 [*Al-Islam*, 2002a].

Such antiseparatism gives the impression that HTI is far from being a group whose principles are opposed to those of Indonesian government, which naturally has an unwavering commitment to its territorial integrity. Nevertheless, the group's antiseparatism is by no means due to its sense of nationalism, but rather attributed to its beliefs that maintaining the integrity of Muslim lands is compulsory [*Al-Islam*, 2001]. HTI, however, perceives Indonesian territory, along with the other Muslim states' territory, as an invaluable entity and has the potential to be incorporated into the future caliphate. It is, thus, reasonable that the group no longer wants to see any territorial separation from the already-splintered Muslim lands.

Given the harsh criticisms HTI receives for its ardent aspirations to the reestablishment of the caliphate, which is widely believed to be a transnational political entity that principally disagrees with the foundation of Indonesia, HTI must then attempt to present itself to the public as a group that works for nationalistic causes by demonstrating that the issues it raises stem from its love of country, which is tantamount to its sense of nationalism. However, HTI's an-

tiprivatization and antiseparatism postures are fully compliant with its principles and are in no way generated by its sense of nationalism, since the group strongly opposes the concept of nationalism. An-Nabhani has argued that nationalism is a dangerous concept to espouse.

> ...it [nationalism] is an inhuman bond for it causes conflicts among people over dominion. Therefore, it is not suitable to be a bond between human beings [an-Nabhani 2002: 34].

HTI's rejection of nationalism is discernible as we analyze some incidents involving Indonesia and Malaysia. Such incidents are as follows: (1) the torture of Nirmala Bonat, an Indonesian migrant worker, committed by her Malaysian employer in May 2004; (2) the brutal assault for reasons unknown on Donal Peter Luther Kolopita, an Indonesian invited to referee the Asian Karate Championships held in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, in August 2007, committed by four Malaysian Police officers;[58] and (3) the dispute over the ownership of a popular folk song "Rasa Sayange," which was used by Malaysia as the soundtrack for its "Truly Asia" tourism campaign.[59]

Most Indonesians were infuriated as a result of these incidents, and some of them staged protests in front of the Malaysian Embassy in Jakarta.[60] However, in contrast to the reaction of most Indonesians, HTI and its members seemed unconcerned and avoided any involvement in the condemnation of Malaysia. Indeed, with respect to problems of Indonesian migrant workers, instead of criticizing Malaysia, HTI chastises the Indonesian government for failing to provide adequate job opportunities for its people [*Al-Islam*, 2002b]. Likewise, in an article entitled "TKI dan Problem

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[58] See *Antara* [25 August 2007]. For comparison, see [*Bernama*, 31 August 2007].

[59] Indonesians claim this song to be its original folk song, and so do Malaysians. However, Malaysian Tourism Minister Tengku Adnan Tengku argued that this is a common folk song in *Kepulauan Nusantara* (Malay Archipelago) whose areas include Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam. See *Star Online* [3 October 2007]. For comparison, see [*Detik News*, 3 October 2007].

[60] See for example, [*Suara Merdeka*, 28 May 2004] and [*Media Indonesia*, 29 August 2007].

Klasik Perburuhan [Indonesian Migrant Workers and the Classical Problems of Labors]," Zamroni Ahmad, an HTI member from the South Sulawesi chapter, attributed migrant-workers problems to the Indonesian government's inability to take decisive measures to generate job opportunities. Equally important, Ahmad added, for the sake of unity, the relationship between Malaysia and Indonesia, both of which are considered Muslim countries, must not be based on nationalism, but rather on the Islamic creed [Ahmad 2004]. Thus, it is obvious that the group's posture toward such incidents is not derived from any sense of nationalism. This posture, however, emanates from the group's very principles to which it strictly adheres.

Electoral Participation

In addition to the aforementioned antiprivatization and antiseparatism issues, participation in the general election is also considered a salient point on which HTI makes an effort to ostensibly abide by Indonesian electoral law. We will see later whether such compliance reflects the group's real intention to participate in the country's five-year elections and thus in accordance with its platform, or merely a superficial posture aiming to secure its presence.

Some authors suggest that HT, in not participating in general elections, consciously opts to remain an extraparliamentary movement [Mayer 2004: 22; Arifin 2005: 160; Karagiannis 2006b: 266; Mandaville 2007: 111]. However, HT once fielded candidates as independents in Jordanian elections for the Chamber of Deputies in 1954 and 1956. Abdul Qadim Zallum, the second HT's amir, in fact competed for a seat, though he was unsuccessful. In both elections the only successful HT candidate was Ahmad al-Daur. The group was actually illegal because the Jordanian government never recognized it, yet it registered as an association under the Ottoman Law of Associations, which was still effective at the time [Cohen 1982: 209-210; Farouki 1996: 6-7; Commins 1991: 196; Okar 2001: 558; Moaddel 2002: 541].

Learning from the past fruitless experience of elections coupled with ubiquitous Arab governments' heavy-handed measures against its members, the group nevertheless drastically changed its posture from being a pro-electoral participation movement to an

extraparliamentary one. In the Jordanian political arena, such a posture was conspicuous as it boycotted 1989 election, the first election that took place after the abolition of political parties in 1957, on the grounds that it saw no benefit in participation and refused to recognize the constitution. Equally important, the main reason why the group fielded candidates in the 1954 and 1956 elections despite the fact that it boycotted the one in 1989, is that while an electoral law issued in 1986 stipulated that everybody who fields as a candidate must declare that they are not affiliated to a party whose platform is opposed to the constitution, such a stipulation did not exist in 1950s [Farouki 1996: 157; Okar 2001: 558].

However, in striking contrast to its universal propensity for being an extraparliamentary movement, as mentioned earlier, in the group's international conference on the caliphate held in Jakarta on 12 August 2007, Yusanto stated that the group did not rule out participation in future Indonesian general election as a contestant on the grounds that HT had experience fielding candidates for the parliament in Jordan's 1950s elections [*Detik News*, 12 August 2007].

HTI believes that according to Islamic rules participation in a general election is allowed (*mubah*) and not forbidden (*haram*).[61] Yusanto argued that the general election is a method that is in accordance with the Islamic concept of *wakalah* (representation). He explained that wakalah consisted of four components: (1) *wakil* (representatives); (2) *muwakil* (people who are represented by wakil); (3) *'Amal* (deeds or activities that will be executed by wakil on behalf of muwakil); and (4) *'Aqad* (pledges made by both wakil and muwakil).

Of these four components, Yusanto stressed, 'amal is so important that if the deeds are good, the good representation follows. By contrast, if the deeds are bad, the representation is accordingly bad. Therefore, according to him, the general election itself cannot be classified as bad or good because it is only a method to choose the representatives. He believes that the primary goals of these representatives are to make the parliament a place for spreading da'wah, for scrutinizing the executive, and most importantly, for implementing

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[61] Muhammad Ismail Yusanto (HTI national spokesman), in discussion with the author, 12 March 2008.

syariah fully. Indeed, Yusanto adds, these are the only goals that the representatives must seek to achieve.

Based on this understanding, HTI holds that it may or may not join the general election depending on the country's sociopolitical circumstances. Furthermore, Yusanto said that at the moment the group does not take part in the general election because it has decided to avoid rivalry with other Islamic parties. By not being a rival, Yusanto claimed to have rightly positioned the group as a partner of both secular and Islamic elements so that it could comfortably propagate da'wah among them. Equally important, Yusanto told the author that HTI never induces its members to take a nonparticipation stance on the general election [*Ibid.*].

In the same fashion as Yusanto, the other HTI senior members also publicly said that the group does not take a nonparticipation stance on the general election. For example, in an article entitled "Meminta Umat Islam tak Terjebak Perpecahan: Ribuan Anggota HTI Lakukan Aksi Damai [Asking Muslims Not to Be Plunged into Disunity: Thousands of HTI Members Stage a Peaceful Demonstration]," a member of HTI West Java chapter, Abdul Jabbar, asserted that the group never dissuades its members from adopting a nonparticipation stance on the general election. He added that HTI would cast votes in the general election on condition that contesting political parties demonstrate their unfaltering commitment to implement syariah [*Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 March 2004]. Another HTI member, Fitra Sagara, delivered a more candid remark on the election issue during the local election held in Sumedang district. He said that election is a product of democracy and HTI is against the concept of democracy. Nevertheless, holding the same view as Jabbar, Sagara stated that the group never forces its members to take a nonparticipation stance on the general election [*Tribun Jabar*, 12 February 2008].

At this juncture, based on the above, it is clear that HTI is trying to show that it is not against electoral participation. Yet, the other facts suggest the otherwise. In striking contrast to the public statements cited earlier through the group's publications, HTI argues that the general election cannot satisfy the public expectations and contesting political parties are too preoccupied with their own

interests. It is nevertheless clearly stated in one of the group's publications that the group is not permitted to participate in the ruling system of the government.

> The party [HT] also does not accept to participate in the ruling system of the government, because it is based on the ruling of *Kufr*, and this is a matter that is forbidden for Muslims [Anonymous 1999: 31].

Farid Wajdi, one of HTI's leading figures, has argued that a decreasing voter turnout rate in local elections due to the fact that people no longer trust participating political parties that have failed to accommodate their aspirations. He also indicated that people are becoming apathetic to democracy.[62] Furthermore, despite the fact that HTI refrains from being a rival for Islamic political parties, the group does not refrain from criticizing such Islamic parties as PPP and PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera or Prosperous Justice Party). This is evident as Wajdi cited a survey conducted in October 2007 by a well-known survey institute, LSI (Lembaga Survei Indonesia or Indonesian Survey Institute), whose findings revealed that these parties' platforms have become increasingly secular and that the public support for them has remained stagnant, if not waning [*Ibid.*]. Likewise, in another article entitled "Parpol dan Kekecewaan Masyarakat [Political Parties and People's Discontent]," HTI resented the fact that participating political parties in post-Suharto general elections (1999 and 2004 general elections) have fallen short of the public expectations [*Al-Wa'ie*, February 2008: 9-13]. In this article, HTI referred to survey findings pointing out that the public support for political parties, including Islamic parties, has sharply declined. The group attributed this decline, particularly among Islamic political parties, to these parties' lack of correct vision and mission.

With regard to the right to vote in the general election, Yusanto maintained that while casting votes on voting days are the right of every Muslim, he added that Muslims must bear the consequences arising from exercising their right. He further specified that the only

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[62] Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, "Membaca Trend Politik Masa Kini," http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2008/07/22/membaca-trend-politik-terkini/ (accessed 27 July 2008).

ideal political parties that Muslims should vote for are those committed to implementing the caliphate and syariah.[63] When Yusanto specified such criteria, it is obvious that what he implicitly identified was his own group, for although HTI is not the only Islamic group that espouses the syariah, it is undeniably the only group with ardent aspirations to reestablish the caliphate.

Another internal source mentioned that if the participating political parties are given rights to radically change the state constitution to the extent that it would be totally in accordance with Islam, the group would consider contesting seats in the general election. A radical change in the state constitution in favor of the complete syariah implementation is, however, as problematic as attempts to incorporate Jakarta Charter in Pancasila, which always ends in failure [Baswedan 2004; Romli 2006: Chapter 8]. Furthermore, article 1 of the draft constitution for the caliphate stipulates that Islamic creed be made the state foundation, and there is no constitution or canon permitted to exist unless it emanates from the Islamic creed [an-Nabhani 2002: 115]. This stipulation inevitably contradicts the Indonesian constitution that positions Pancasila as both the state ideology and the supreme source of law. Thus, any attempt to make the Islamic creed the only state ideology would be tantamount to replacing Pancasila with Islam, which is at best unfeasible, if not impossible. After all, throughout Indonesian history Pancasila has remained the state ideology, and aspirations to radically change the state ideology from Pancasila to Islam lie on the very fringes of public discourse.

Considering that replacing Pancasila with Islam is at best unfeasible, and that HTI members are strongly tied to Islam's very ideology and required to strictly comply with its rules,[64] it is most likely that the group's public statements to the effect that it could contest seats in the future general election and that it gives freedom to its members to exercise their voting rights are simply rhetorical tactics. These rhetorical tactics in all likelihood aim to deliberately prevent

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[63] Muhammad Ismail Yusanto (HTI national spokesman), in discussion with the author, 12 March 2008. See also Fealy [2007: 159].

[64] For more details on these facts, see for example, Farouki [1996: 132-145] and Rosenau [2007: 90].

HTI from violating the country's laws on the general election, which stipulates that any attempt to discourage people from exercising their right to vote is considered illegal and thus subject to punishment.[65] This stipulation is confirmed by Agustiani Tio Fridelina, a member of Bawaslu (Badan Pengawas Pemilu or Electoral Monitoring Committee), which functions as a committee whose primary task is to monitor the overall electoral process [*Detik News*, 7 August 2008]. Such rhetorical tactics are nevertheless advantageous to HTI, and the group heavily relies on them to circumvent legal constraints resulting from the electoral law.

Conclusion

Indonesia is now witnessing an increasing activism among Islamic revivalist groups whose goals revolve around the implementation of syariah and the caliphate. One of these Islamic revivalist groups is HTI, which is an example of a transnational movement that attempts to advance such goals within an Indonesian sociopolitical milieu. The group gained a favorable political opportunity to come out in the open in 2000 following the restoration of freedoms after the end of the Suharto regime in 1998. As a social movement HTI demonstrates its commitment to interacting continuously with both the ruling elite and its opponents. The group's activities center around politics such as holding regular mass demonstrations, forging alliances with the other Islamic groups, and seeking public support through its causes. The group raises various sociopolitical and economic as well as religious issues, which primarily aim at chastising the government for its inability to cope with the country's problems, especially the socioeconomic ones. As panaceas for such problems the group offers both the government and the public the master frames of the caliphate and syariah on which it largely relies not only to shape its identities, but also to garner as much support as possible. Furthermore, while HTI's sphere of operation lies within a state that considers Islam neither its ideology nor its law, the group nevertheless seeks to raise public awareness on the importance of

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[65] See Indonesian Law concerning General Election No. 12 Year 2003 article 139 and No. 10 Year 2008 article 287.

embracing Islam not only as a personal faith, but also as an all-encompassing ideology, which includes a set of values, norms, and laws that must serve as the only source of reference for dealing with all aspects of life.

Being a branch of the international Hizbut Tahrir movement, the group inevitably confronts a major challenge insofar as it seeks to appeal to the Indonesian public: because it is compulsory for all HTI members to fully comply with the group's universal rules and amir's instructions, HTI must strategically convey its messages to the public in ways that would allow it to circumvent the sociopolitical and legal constraints within Indonesian context without having to deviate from its universal platform. Since HTI's objective to reestablish the global caliphate is often regarded by its opponents as a threat to the existence of the Indonesia, it has had to employ rhetorical tactics and to project its best image by demonstrating that its causes are in line with those of most Indonesians and are in full compliance with the country's laws.

In this paper I suggest that while HTI does not deviate from its universal platform, it is taking full advantage of these tactics to maintain its presence and activities in the country. It is very likely that the group's future relies heavily on its ability to exploit such tactics.

Studies such as this can help us gain a better understanding of the dynamics of Islamic activism in Indonesia. In the new democratic era after the fall of Suharto, the enhanced role of Islamic revivalist groups is nevertheless not surprising, given the state's commitment to guarantee the freedom of expression and associations. This post-Suharto Islamic activism has been characterized by dynamic discourse and political contestation between an Islamic revivalist camp and its opponents ranging from moderate and liberal Islamic camps to the secular ones, which mostly hold that the implementation of syariah and the caliphate could jeopardize the country's national integrity. As far as Indonesia is concerned, there are incentives to these two camps to effectively advance their political interests, given the country's considerable degree of political openness. However, such political openness is not the only key factor in determining the future of these camps to mobilize support and influence

the government; much of the risk rests on their ability to exploit their organizational resources and to project the best possible image for their causes. Thus, movements that could make better use of such ability would be most likely to succeed.

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