The bomb blasts that rocked Bali on October 12, 2002 and killed 202 people have led to a new concern with the Islamic revival that emerged in Indonesia under the New Order in the 1980s. Although there is a long history of bombings in Indonesia—the national news magazine *Tempo* lists 20 since July 4, 2000 and another list compiled by the Volunteer Team for Humanitarian Aid from various sources lists 64 bombings between 1962 and 2002—Indonesians were shocked by the target chosen (foreign tourists) and the size of the bomb. Immediately speculation arose about who was behind the bombing. Initially, many Indonesians were certain that this bomb was too big to be the work of local terrorists. Some were suspicious that the Indonesian military might be involved, but most people seemed to prefer the theory that the CIA (or possibly Mossad) was behind the bombing. Western intelligence agencies were accused of plotting the bombing in order to discredit Islam and pressure Indonesia’s government into supporting the American war against terrorism.

At the time of the bombing, I was teaching a seminar on globalization at the State Islamic University (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah) in Jakarta. I found that all of my students were suspicious that the United States was behind the bombing. They brought me articles from the Islamist magazine *Sabili* and from websites to support their belief that Western intelligence organizations were involved. Over the following months, I found that this suspicion lingered on despite police investigations that uncovered Jemaah Islamiah (JI), an underground network of Islamists fighting for the establishment of an Islamic State in Southeast Asia. Even after the arrest of 83 members of JI as of August 2003 doubts persisted. A little over a year after the Bali bombing, polls showed that less than half the Indonesian public believed that JI exists. The belief that the bombings were engineered by an intelligence agency to discredit Islam is particularly strong among Muslim students, among whom there is growing acceptance of the idea that the Islamic world is under attack by Western forces. This view has been promoted by a movement of religious purification and intensification (*dakwah*) that has been reshaping the face of Indonesian Islam over the last three decades.

Dakwah is conducted by all Islamic organizations as a religious obligation, and it includes both spreading the faith to unbelievers and providing a better understanding of Islam to nominal Muslims. However, the dakwah movement that operated underground or with a low profile under the New Order was an Islamist movement that targeted university students. Islamist refers to those who maintain that Muslims must struggle to establish an Islamic government and shari’ah (Islamic law) in majority Muslim states. The Islamists believe that Islam is under attack by the Western world (glossed variously as secularism, a Jewish conspiracy, communism, Christianization, and American domination), and it must be defended. Radical Islamist groups are prepared to use violence in defense of Islam. The dakwah movement appealed to a younger generation of Islamic activists disillusioned with the promise of the secular nation state to bring prosperity and greater social and economic justice. They believe that only the
establishment of an Islamic government can bring genuine reform and justice. Their slogan, derived from the Muslim Brotherhood, is “Islam is the solution.”

In the first part of this essay I describe how the dakwah movement began in the 1970s, how students who had studied in the Middle East, where they were inspired by Islamist thinkers, established new dakwah organizations in the 1980s and how the dakwah movement emerged as a political force in the 1990s. I distinguish four different (but overlapping) streams of dakwah. In part two I apply the analysis of Gilles Kepel in *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (2002) to Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS), the dynamic new political party to emerge from the dakwah movement. I argue that PKS is a moderate alternative to radical Islamism.

**Four Streams of Dakwah**

Islamist dakwah groups all believe that Indonesia should have an Islamic government because it is a majority Muslim nation, but there are important differences on strategies for establishing an Islamic government and the relation of Islam to democracy. From these differences I distinguish four streams within the Islamist dakwah movement, which derive their political ideology from different sources:

1) The first stream, which is identified with the Indonesian Council for Islamic Mission (Dewan Dakah Islam Indonesia or DDII) and the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Muslim World (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam or KISDI), derives from the Islamic political party Masyumi, which was banned by Sukarno in 1960. Hardliners in this stream reject democracy as un-Islamic. As Eggy Sudjana, a KISDI leader explained, “The mechanisms of Islam are comprehensive. Therefore, with regard to Islam, there is no need for democracy. Islam promotes mutual consensus through deliberation. In relation to the laws of God, there is no need for deliberation and consensus, it’s simply a matter of implementation of the laws or compliance or obedience.” However, others in this stream accept the possibility that an Islamic government could be established through democratic elections. They have formed the Crescent Moon and Star Party, Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB), which presses for the adoption of Islamic law in Indonesia.

2) Second is the group of dakwah activists who established the Muslim Student Action Union (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia or KAMMI) and the Prosperous Justice Party, formerly the Justice Party (Partai Keadilan or PK). Many of these activists have been influenced by the writings of the Muslim Brotherhood. They argue that democracy provides a way to establish an Islamic government and that there is no contradiction between Islam and democracy. During the 1980s, this steam of dakwah used the name *usroh* (nuclear family or cell), which was adopted from the Muslim Brotherhood. When the name *usroh* came to be associated with radical Islamist groups, many groups began to call their movement *halaqah*, which refers to a circle of students and their teacher. In the 1990s, this stream of dakwah adopted the name *tarbiyah*, the Arabic word for education under a teacher who provides moral guidance.
3) Third is a stream of neo-Salafy dakwah. This stream rejects democracy and advocates the implementation of Islamic law (shari'ah). Although Salafy teachings are conservative, maintaining that Muslims must not oppose a legitimate government, neo-Salafy dakwah has produced some of the most radical Islamist groups, such as the Communication Forum of the Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet (Forum Komuikasi Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah or FKASWJ), which was formally established in February 1998, and Jemaah Islamyiah, the group responsible for the bombing in Bali in October 2002. Neo-Salafy radicals believe that armed jihad is necessary in the face of efforts by the United States and Israel to destroy Islam.

4) Fourth is Hizbut Tahrir (Liberation Party), which rejects the nation-state and democracy and has the goal of reestablishing the caliphate as a government for all Muslims. This vision is both a source of strength and weakness. Many young people are attracted to Hizbut Tahrir by the argument that Islam is no longer a powerful force in world politics because Muslims have been divided by a nation-state system imposed by the West. However, critics find the goals of Hizbut Tahrir unrealistic.

In the first part of this essay, the emergence of the Islamist dakwah movement during the three decades of the New Order is described. DDII was established in 1967, the tarbiyah stream of dakwah emerged in Indonesia in the 1970s, while Neo-Salafy dakwah and Hizbut Tahrir were brought to Indonesia in the 1980s. Islamist dakwah groups kept a low profile throughout the 1970s and 80s, as Islamist activists were subject to arrest. However in the 1990s, when the Suharto regime turned to Muslims for support, dakwah organizations began to take a public role. KISDI and the campus dakwah movement, which established KAMMI, played a central role in the tumultuous politics of the reformasi movement to bring down Suharto. As will be seen, sometimes these different streams of Islamist dakwah joined together; at other times they have opposed each other.

Olivier Roy (1992) and Giles Kepel (2002) have provided a sociological framework to explain the rise of Islamist movements under the secular nationalist governments of newly independent nations in the Middle East and South Asia. They argue that these movements were fueled by an unprecedented demographic change. Between 1955 and 1970, population growth in the Muslim world approached 50 percent. Rural families moved to urban centers where they settled in slums at the margins of cities. By and large, the governments of the new states failed to provide health care and social services to these urban migrants. However, educational systems were expanded, and the first generation raised under secular nationalist governments was better educated than their parents, and they hoped for a better future. But there were few job opportunities for the newly educated urban poor of the 1970 and 80s, and their discontent was easily mobilized by the Islamists.

A similar demographic shift has fueled Islamism in Indonesia. During the New Order period, Indonesia’s urban population grew from under 20 percent of the population to 35 percent. The percentage of young adults with basic literacy skills rose from 40 percent to 90 percent. The percentage of people completing senior high school rose from
4 percent in 1970 to 30 percent in 1990. Furthermore, there has been a perennial shortage of jobs for students emerging from the universities. This high rate of semi-employment and unemployment was made drastically worse by the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997.

Islamic proselytizing movements in the Middle East were led by a new class of intellectuals educated in secular universities, whom Roy called “lay religious radicals.” Kepel argues that political Islamism succeeded where these Islamist intellectuals won support from two groups, the young urban poor and the pious middle class. For marginalized urban youth, Islamism offered the promise of jobs and power. For the pious middle class, political Islam offered hope of wresting control of the government from incumbent elites who were unresponsive to their needs. Kepel suggests that Islamist intellectuals were required to gloss over the contradiction between the radical demands of poor urban youth who had nothing to loose and the conservatism of the middle class who feared disorder and violence. This was done by arguing that Islam provided an ethical framework for society and government that would bring both moral order and greater prosperity for all. The failure of Islamic regimes was blamed on external forces hostile to Islam.

Applying this analysis to Islamism in Indonesia today reveals some interesting contrasts. In Indonesia, as elsewhere, the dakwah movement was centered in secular universities. When the effects of the 1997 Asian economic crisis hit Indonesia, the middle class withdrew its allegiance from the New Order and gave its support to a student-led reform movement. This movement had two components, one secular and one Islamic. While leaders of the secular wing of the student movement wanted to mobilize poor urban youth in support of the campaign to bring down Suharto, leaders of the Islamic wing of the student movement resisted this strategy. They focused on winning support from the middle class with the claim that as a “moral movement” they promised the security and order of a society based on Islamic principles. Dakwah leaders claim that an Islamic government will establish a just social order, but they have not tried to recruit a following among the urban poor and unemployed by promising a radically changed social order. On the other hand, Islamist groups have demonstrated their capacity to mobilize unemployed youth in mass demonstrations against the United States and other enemies of Islam. Similarly, the new political party that emerged from the dakwah movement in the post-Suharto period, the Justice party (now the Justice and Prosperity Party, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera or PKS) has generated a great deal of interest and potential support in the middle class for its fight against corruption. However, it has offered little to the poor and unemployed beyond a more effective response to natural and humanitarian crisis situations.

Islamist Dakwah under the New Order

The 1970s: Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (DDII) and Origins of Islamism

Islamic organizations played an important role in the nationalist struggle against Dutch rule. Consequently certain groups of Muslims felt the adoption of a republican
constitution in 1945 to be a betrayal of their hopes and aspirations. The Darul Islam movement to establish an Islamic state that emerged in 1948 and the 1957 rebellions in West Java, West Sumatra and South Sulawesi that claimed Islamic credentials set the stage for opposition between Islam and the newly independent Indonesian Republic. In 1960, Sukarno banned Masyumi (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia), the Islamic political party of modernist Muslims, on the grounds that it was implicated in the regional rebellions and because Masyumi opposed the implementation of presidential rule under the slogan of “guided democracy.”

The New Order of Suharto attempted to shape Indonesian Islam as apolitical and supportive of government development programs. Religious teachers were trained in the state-funded Institutes for Islamic Studies (Institut Agama Islam Negri or IAIN), and religious education in all schools was mandated. The New Order also quietly gave its approval to an Islamic Renewal movement (Pembaruan) led by Nurcholish Madjid, who as president of the Islamic Students Association (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam or HMI) in 1970 provoked heated controversy when he called for Islam to be separated from politics with the slogan “Islam Yes, Islamic Party No.” The Renewal movement emphasized the interpretation of scripture in application to the modern world and the realization of Islamic values in personal life rather than through political parties.

When Mohammad Natsir and other Masyumi leaders were released from prison by Suharto’s New Order, they were banned from reestablishing Masyumi or joining the party that had been revived under the name of Parmusi. Instead, they founded the Indonesian Council for Islamic Mission (DDII) with the goal of Islamizing Indonesian society from the ground up through dakwah. DDII emphasized that Islamic law is incumbent on anyone who calls himself a Muslim and stressed outward signs of Islamic commitment, such as Islamic dress, separation of the sexes, Arabic forms of address and the five daily prayers. This steam of dakwah, which as been described as “scripturalist” by William Liddle, promotes a literal interpretation of the Qur’an. DDII mission activities targeted peoples in the outer islands of Indonesia where Christian missionaries were proselytizing and students in the secular state universities. *Media Dakwah*, a monthly journal produced by DDII and distributed to campus mosques, consistently warned of the threat of “Christianization” and was outspoken in its attacks on a world Zionist conspiracy. It also attacked Nurcholish Madjid and the liberal Renewal movement as the “Trojan Horse” of Islamic liberalism. DDII dakwah built the foundations for Islamism in campus mosques throughout the country.

In the 1970s a second dakwah movement emerged in Indonesia modeled on Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), an Islamic movement founded in 1971 by Anwar Ibrahim and other student activists in Malaysia. ABIM drew inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwanul Muslimin) and the ideas of Mawlana Mawdudi, who founded Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan in 1941. Mawdudi advocated “Islamization from above” through a state in which sovereignty would be exercised in the name of Allah and Shari’ah would be implemented. ABIM began to work in the slums around Kuala Lumpur and in 1974 organized demonstrations of impoverished rural youth in Baling.
Alarmed by Islamic activism on the issue of poverty, the Malaysian government cracked down on students and put Anwar Ibrahim in prison for two years.

Ir. Imaduddin Abdul Rahim (known as Bang Imad) taught in Malaysia in the early 1970s. When he returned to Indonesia to Salman Mosque at the Bandung Institute of Technology, he became the head of the dakwah wing of HMI. In 1974 he broke with HMI and founded Latihan Mujahid Dakwh (LMD) based on the ideas and methods of ABIM. Under the charismatic leadership of Imaduddin, Salman Mosque became the model for dakwah exemplifying Islam as a total way of life. Imaduddin’s *Kuliah Tauhid* [Lectures on the Unity of God], which came to be known as the “Green Book,” taught that *tauhid*, the unity of God, means that sacred and secular, temporal and transcendental are not distinguished in Islam. Imaduddin and his colleagues also published an ABIM guide to action entitled *Panduan Usrah.*

ABIM adopted its method of organization, *usroh*, from the Muslim Brotherhood. *Usroh* were small groups of 15-25 students who met regularly to study the Qur’an and writings by the Muslim Brothers. Hermawan Dipoyono was an early activist at Salman Mosque. He recalled, “I myself started the first *usroh* in Salman Mosque, maybe the first *usroh* in Indonesia. I was sent to Malaysia by Imaduddin, where I found books by the Muslim Brothers. I brought them back and started translating them into Indonesian. This was in 1976-1977. It was a dangerous time to do dakwah. I would translate a few pages, and they would be copied and passed around. We studied these in our *usroh*.”

Natsir and DDII leaders considered ABIM to be an extension of Masyumi in politicizing Islam. They joined with Imaduddin and his followers to build a movement of Islamic teaching understood as a form of *jihad* or holy struggle waged against “Western” ways of life—capitalism, secularism, liberalism, communism, and materialism. The movement emphasized the superiority of Islam to all other forms of life. The authority of the diverse commentaries on the Qur’an and Sunnah in Islamic tradition was rejected as expressed in the “fundamentalist” slogan “back to the Qur’an and Sunnah.” All aspects of life and society should be imbued with Islamic values and modeled on the life of the Prophet and his followers. Dakwah activities included Islamic educational programs for children and adults and the establishment of Teknosa, a cooperative that pioneered Islamic banking and micro-credit in the early 80s.

Two other dakwah organizations that also appeared in Indonesia in the 1970s, Jama’ah Tabligh and Darul Arqam, were quietist movements that rejected political involvement. These movements also argued that Islam should be lived as a total way of life and attracted their followers from university students. Yet they have been widely regarded as “extreme” and marginal because of the distinctive dress that identifies members of the community.

**The 1980s: The Emergence of an Islamic Revival and the Spread of Political Dakwah**
By the mid-1980s, a broad-based Islamic revival was underway in Indonesia. The middle class found that Islam provided a unifying set of values in a rapidly modernizing society in which ethnic traditions no longer provided a guide. For the working class Islam provided new ways to establish community in urban settings and a channel for protest. The turn to Islam was most evident among university students, as political dakwah spread from campus to campus. Two factors were important in this development. First was the ban on political activity by students through the Campus Normalization Act after students organized protests against the reelection of Suharto for a third term in 1978. As the economist Rizal Ramli recalled, “When I was at ITB in the late 1970s all the student political activity revolved around the student centre. But ever since the government imposed restrictions on campus politics, the student center had been dead. All the activity is now funneled to the mosque. Young people need an outlet for their political aspirations and they will find it where they can.” Second was the Iranian Revolution of 1979, which led politically active students to turn to the dakwah movement. These students were inspired by the writings of Ali Shari’ati (1933-1977), an Iranian intellectual who had studied in Paris, where he was influenced by Third World and Left intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Che Guevara, and Frantz Fanon. Shari’ati transposed Marxist language of class struggle into an Islamic vocabulary, distinguishing the mostakbirine (the arrogant) and the mostadafine (the disinherited or oppressed). The Muslim intellectual Jalaluddin Rachmat writes that Salman Mosque became “a sanctuary for the expression of political dissatisfaction and frustration. . . . When they look around them, young Muslims begin to see that development is not the panacea it is made out to be, so they embrace Islam and hope their religion can solve all their problems.”

Students returning home from their studies in the Middle East in the 1980s provided new leadership to the dakwah movement. They produced Indonesian translations of works by the Muslim Brothers and other Islamist thinkers. New Islamic presses flooded bookstores with books on Islam. Al-Ishlahy Press, established by Abdi Sumaithi, a rising star among young DDII activists who took the name Abu Ridho in Egypt, published works by Hassan Al Banna, Mustafa Masyhur, and Sa’id Hawwa. Sayyid Qutb’s Ma’alim fit Thariq was translated as Petunjuk Jalan [Sign Post in the Road] by Rahman Zainuddin (who studied in Syria) and published by Media Dakwah. The International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO) was another vehicle for bringing the work of Middle Eastern Islamic thinkers to Indonesia. These works became the core texts of Islamist activists in campus-based dakwah groups.

To counter the influence of revolutionary Shiism from Iran, the Muslim World League (Rabitah al-‘Alam al-Islami), an organization founded by the government of Saudi Arabia in 1964, sponsored a stream of Wahabi or Salafy dakwah. This form of dakwah has been called neo-Salafy because it mixes Salafy political conservatism with the revolutionary Islamism of the Muslim Brothers. In the 1950s, members of the Muslim Brotherhood driven out of Egypt by Nasser sought refuge in Saudi Arabia. As teachers in Saudi universities during the 1960s, they introduced revolutionary Islamism to students from all over the world. They instilled in their students the conviction that Islam is being undermined by Zionist/Christian and secular forces so that militant action must be taken in its defense.
In Indonesia, the neo-Salafi stream of dakwah is associated with the Saudi-funded Institute for Islamic and Arabic Studies (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab or LIPIA) in Jakarta and the Al-Irsyad Foundation, a century-old Yemeni charity. Al Irsyad’s activities in Indonesia are directed by members of the Hadrami community, Indonesians whose ancestors came from the Hadramaut region of Yemen. Some graduates of LIPIA went on to study in Saudi Arabia on scholarships provided by the Saudi government. Jafar Umar Thalib is a Hadrami Indonesian, who studied at LIPIA in Jakarta and went on to study in Saudi Arabia on a DDII scholarship in 1986. In 1987 he joined the mujahidin in Afghanistan. After resuming his studies in Yemen between 1990 and 1993, he returned to Indonesia in 1994. In 2000 he founded Laskar Jihad, the paramilitary wing of the Communication Forum of the Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet (Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah or FKASWJ), which played a major role in exacerbating the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Maluku and Poso in 2000 through 2002.

The Saudi government began to reorient its financial support to more conservative Salafi teachings in the 1990s when the Muslim Brotherhood gave its support to Sadam Hussein in the Gulf War. At LIPIA today, both conservative neo-Salafi and the more radical teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood are found. In contrast to Laskar Jihad, most neo-Salafi dakwah groups started by LIPIA graduates and students returning from Saudi Arabia aimed at change through Islamic education.

Ma’had Al-Hikmah is one example of an organization founded by a LIPIA graduate. Established in a South Jakarta mosque in 1987 by Abdul Hasib Hasan, Ma’had Al-Hikmah set up Qur’an study circles (da’urah), which attract students from institutions of higher learning including the University of Indonesia, the teacher training institute IKIP Jakarta, and Trisakti (a private university). Khairu Ummah, which was established in 1989 by Ihsan Tanjung, Zainal Muttaqin (founder of Sabili), Ade Kholifah, and Muhammad Anis Matta from LIPIA, developed dakwah training courses and produced materials for Friday sermons. Khairu Ummah worked to extend the reach of dakwah from university campuses to mosques in areas such as Jabotabek, the industrial zone around Jakarta, and to the outer islands of Indonesia, where dakwah preachers were invited by Khairu Ummah to speak in mosques serving the employees of oil and mining companies. Khairu Ummah was also the first dakwah organization to utilize private television stations for dakwah. TV dakwah has now become a regular feature of Indonesian television. In the late 1990s, when the student-led movement to bring down Suharto emerged, the founders of Khairu Ummah and Ma’had Al-Hikmah joined in establishing KAMMI, which brought dakwah groups together in support of the Reformasi movement. They also played a central role in the formation of Partai Keadilan in 1999.

Yet a fourth stream of political dakwah, Hizbut Tahrir [Party of Liberation], was brought to Indonesia at the end of the 1980s by Abdurrahman Albaghdadi, who was invited to come from Australia by KH Abdullah bin Nuh, the head of Al Ghazali Pesantren in Bogor. Hizbut Tahrir is a movement founded in 1953 by Sheikh Taqiyuddin An-Nabhani, a former member of the Muslim Brothers, with the goal of reestablishing
the Caliphate. The aim of dakwah is to show that Islam provides a solution to the multiple problems that confront society and that Muslims will only be respected when they are represented by a strong and unified government. Nabhani argued that Shari’ah was the key to restoring the greatness of Islamic civilization. Hizbut Tahrir rejects democracy as a Western [non-Islamic] form of government and regards involvement in the politics of a secular state as a useless diversion from the goal of reestablishing the Caliphate, but it rejects the use of violence.

Hizbut Tahrir spread from the Bogor Agricultural Institute to Padjadjaran University in Bandung, IKIP Malang, Airlangga University in Surabaya, and Hasanuddin University in Ujung Pandang, South Sulawesi. The idea of establishing a network of campus dakwah organizations appears to have originated with leaders of Hizbut Tahrir. The establishment of the Organization for Campus Dakwah (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus or LDK) at a gathering (silaturahmi) in Bandung in 1988 positioned the dakwah movement to emerge as a political force in the 1990s.

The New Order response to the Islamic revival of the 1980s combined repression with manipulation. The massacre of Muslim protestors from a mosque in Tanjung Priok, a poor area in the port of Jakarta, in 1984 served warning on all Islamist groups. A demonstration protesting the detention of four leaders from the mosque was declared to be a “riot,” and the military acted with murderous force. An estimated 200 people were killed. The following year, a Law on Mass Organizations required all organizations to accept the official government ideology, Pancasila, as their sole basis. This law forced Muslim organizations to give up Islam as their fundamental principle. The Islamic Students’ Association (HMI) split over this issue, and those with Islamist sympathies formed the Council to Safeguard HMI (HMI Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi or MHI MPO) and went underground. Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII), the organization of secondary school students formerly associated with Masjumi, also went underground.

Islamist groups, such as Komando Jihad and the movement for an Indonesian Islamic State (Negara Islam Indonesia or NII) were targeted by the government. However, there is evidence that these groups were being manipulated by Indonesian military intelligence operations. As Vatikiotis writes: “It is believed, for example, that Ali Murtopo [the head of Military Intelligence] brought together former leaders of the West Java-based Darul Islam revolt, which had been crushed by the army in the 1960s, and actually asked them to reactivate the movement. He is said to have told them they would be helping to stamp out Communism. The real reason is thought to be Murtopo’s desire to discredit Islamic political forces before the elections. In the next two years, hundreds of people were arrested and accused of belonging to . . . Komando Jihad. Implausible as this sounds—audacious even—the habit of some New Order followers to believe the best way to shore up their power is to ‘engineer’ political threats is well attested.”

Another Islamist group known as Usroh, was based at Pondok Ngruki Pesantren near Solo in Central Java. The founders of this group were Abdullah Sungkar, who was linked to the (defeated) Darul Islam movement in West Java, and Abu Bakir Ba’asyir, now said to be the spiritual head of Jamaah Islamiah, the organization responsible for a
series of bombings in Indonesia in 2001 and 2002, including the Bali bombing of October 2002. In 1986 Sungkar and Ba’asyir were arrested. In 1988, before being sentenced, they fled to Malaysia. In 1989, the Indonesian Army unleashed a military operation against an Usroh community in Lampung, South Sumatra, on the grounds that they were Islamist extremists. However, it is widely believed that the community in Lampung was attacked not for its Islamist teachings but in the context of a dispute with military officials over land occupied by the community. After the attack on the community, the military appropriated the land. In Malaysia, Sungkar and Ba’asyir established Jamaah Islamiah (JI) and sent Indonesian Islamists for military training as mujahidin in Afghanistan.41

During the 1980s, leaders of the dakwah movement were liable to arrest. In 1979 the charismatic preacher Imaduddin was jailed, but he was later allowed to leave Indonesia to go to the United States, where he entered a Ph.D. program. At the beginning of the 1990s, however, when the New Order changed course and began to court Islamic leaders, Imaduddin returned home, where he was given a position in a new organization of Islamic intellectuals, which was led by Suharto’s protégé, B. J. Habibie.

After the 1980s, Islamist dakwah groups abandoned the name usroh due to its radical associations, including the hijacking of a Garuda flight to Thailand by the Imron Usroh of Komando Jihad in 1981 and the usroh circles associated with Sungkar and Ba’asyir. In place of usroh, many groups adopted the name halaqah (study circle).

1990s: Political Dakwah and the Reformasi Movement

New Order policy toward Islam changed after Suharto replaced Benny Murdani as armed forces commander in 1987. Murdani, a Catholic, was often accused of “Islamophobia.” In 1989 the New Order gave Islamic courts jurisdiction over marriage, inheritance, and donations. The following year, Suharto approved the establishment of the Association of Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia or ICMI), an idea initially proposed by five student activists in the dakwah movement.42 The new organization was to be headed by Suharto’s close associate, B. J. Habibie. ICMI promised Muslims a more prominent role in government. Under the aegis of ICMI, an Islamic newspaper, Republika, an Islamic think-tank, the Center for Information and Development Studies (CIDES), and an Islamic bank, were established. In 1991, Suharto went on the hajj.43 Abdurrahman Wahid, leader of Nahdlatul Ulama, interpreted this “turn to Islam” as an attempt to garner support from previously disaffected Muslims, “The competition between power centers in our country in the 1990s reflects the need on the president’s part for the widest possible support from society, which means from Islamic movements as well. To get that support, identification of national politics with Islam is necessary.”44 In the lead up to the 1992 election, Muslim leaders were asked to endorse Suharto for another term as president.45

In the 1990s political dakwah emerged as a new force, legitimated by the Islamic turn taken by Suharto and inspired by the success of the mujahidin in driving Russian troops out of Afghanistan in 1989. In 1991 students launched demonstrations protesting a state-sponsored lottery on the grounds that Islam forbids gambling. In December 1993,
the government scrapped the lottery. The political themes in Islamic student activism were evident. Anies Rasyid Baswedan of the Muslim Community Movement of Yogyakarta explained, “We don’t want it to stop here. …We’re thinking about democracy. We have been cool for 15-20 years and we see the SDSB [the lottery] as a starting point to gather student power. . . . We would like to push the government into giving the people better access to political and economic resources.”

Popular preachers like Zainuddin M. Z. drew vast crowds with sermons castigating the rich and laced with subtle criticism of corruption in high places. The Dakwah movement began to visibly transform university campuses. By the mid-90s, the Islamic head-covering (jilbab) worn by women, the most easily identifiable sign of the impact of dakwah, was a common sight.

The victory of the mujahidin in Afghanistan politicized and radicalized the dakwah movement. In 1992, Abu Ridho AS, Al Muzammil Yusuf and Habib Abu Bakar Al Habsyi established the Information and Study Center for the Contemporary Islamic World (Studi dan Informasi Dunia Islam Kontemporer or SIDIK) to raise awareness of the plight of Muslims in all parts of the world. SIDIK published a magazine called Jurnal Dunia Islam promoting solidarity with the Muslims in other countries and showed films on university campuses about the conflict in Palestine and the war in Bosnia. SIDIK rejected Western reports of ethnic-cleansing of Bosnians by Serbs, claiming that what was really occurring was a religious-cleansing of Muslims by Serbian Christians.

With financial support from Saudi sources, M. Zainal Muttaqien with Rahmat Abdullah and activists from PII founded Sabili, a weekly magazine that was avidly read by university students. Under pressure from the New Order, Ŝabili was forced to stop publication, but after the fall of Suharto in 1998, it was revived and became the second best-selling magazine in Indonesia, surpassing the well-known and highly respected news magazine Tempo. In addition to articles on standard Islamist dakwah themes, such as the danger of secularism and protests against gambling and prostitution, Sabili focused on the theme of jihad and featured stories about Muslims under attack, with titles such as “NATO-Serbia: the Slaughter of Kosovo’s Muslims” (“NATO-Serbia: Bantai Muslim Kosova,”). Sabili reminded readers of the obligation of all Muslims to come to the aid of Muslims under attack. After January 1999, when Christian-Muslim violence erupted in Ambon, Sabili included an article that listed all the passages in the Qur’an that call for jihad and called for the defense of Muslims in Indonesia in articles with titles such as “Save Ambon, Fan the Flames of Your Martyrdom” (Selamatkan Ambon, Kobarkan Darah Syahidmu!) and “Jihad to the Last Drop of Blood” (Jihad Sampai Titik Darah Penghabisan). SIDIK and Sabili played a strategic role in spreading the Islamist view that Muslims are under attack throughout the world and that believers must come to the defense of Islam.

The Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Muslim World (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam or KISDI) was established in 1987 by Muhammad Natsir and DDII activists in support of Palestinian Muslims during the first Intifada. During the Bosnia war (1992-1995), KISDI called for volunteers to fight against (Christian) Serb aggression. Although no Indonesians were actually sent to
Bosnia, thousands of young men responded to the call for volunteers. This campaign demonstrated the appeal of militant Islam to unemployed and semi-employed youth and provided the basis for recruiting young men to the paramilitary Islamic groups that were used against secular pro-democracy demonstrators in 1998.

By 1998, when the Asian economic crisis of 1997 had begun to erode the legitimacy of the Suharto government, some New Order elites, in particular Suharto’s son-in-law Lt. General Prabowo Subianto, formed an alliance with KISDI to oppose the student-led pro-democracy movement, which was said to represent the forces of “communism” and “secularism.” KISDI’s leaders appeared to hope that an Islamic regime might come to power with support from the Indonesian military. According to H. Ahmad Sumargono, chairman of KISDI, “We know that in order to change things in Indonesia, you have to have the military on your side. That’s why we like Prabowo so much. He has the same vision; he is a good Muslim.” After Prabowo was implicated in the abduction and torture of democracy activists in early 1998, KISDI identified Vice President B.J. Habibie as a political leader who would be likely to support the goals of KISDI. Sumargono put it this way, “It is our hope that Habibie and Islamic power will be our future.” In May of 1998 when students from the Reformasi movement occupied the parliament building demanding that President Suharto step down, KISDI youth groups were brought out in support of Habibie. They chanted “God is great” and carried banners reading; “If you’re against Habibie, you’re against Islam. And if you’re against Islam, you’re a communist.”

KISDI supporters included members of the Inter-University Muslim Students Association (Himpunan Mahasiswa Muslim Antar Kampus or HAMMAS), an organization established in October 1998 shortly after the fall of Suharto. HAMMAS, which is based in second-ranked universities in Jakarta and West Java, claimed in August 1999 to have 10,000 members, but this was most probably an over-estimate of its true strength. The name HAMMAS, chosen to declare militant support for Palestinians, reflects the militant and radical orientation of this group. In June 2000, HAMMAS joined in an attack on the National Commission on Human Rights to protest what was said to be a biased report on the shooting of Muslim demonstrators in Tanjung Priok in 1984. The mobilization of HAMMAS in this attack and in support of President Habibie in 1999 showed that political elites could recruit marginalized urban youth to the Islamist cause and use them in support of their own interests.

Campus dakwah activists generally remained aloof from KISDI, suspicious of its association with the Suharto regime and the military. The generation gap between the leaders of KISDI / DDII and the activists who established their own dakwah organizations in the 1980 and 90s also created distance. The campus activists worked to strengthen their organizational base (LDK) and to unify the different streams of dakwah in a movement that they called tarbiyah (education under the moral guidance of a teacher). This name, which is used by the Education faculties of State Islamic Institutes, helped to legitimate the campus-based dakwah movement by emphasizing the personal and moral aspects of Islamization. It also distanced the movement from the contradictions and contamination of “politics.” New publications were started, such as Saksi (Witness)
and Tarbawi (Educational), following the format of Sabili but stressing personal and political reform based on Islamic principles rather than jihad and the need to defend Islam against attack. Amien Rais has called this form of dakwah politik adiluhung, “high” or “moral” politics, because it is inspired by the moral principles of Islam and is to be distinguished from a low form of political Islam which seeks control of the state in order to construct an Islamic society from a position of power. The critique of the low form appears to be aimed at KISDI.  

One example of a tarbiyah organization is Nurul Fikri, a leadership training Institute that provides short training courses in dakwah for university students. Nurul Fikri also developed courses to prepare young Muslim activists for university entrance exams. Students accepted at leading universities became role models for others and were asked to return to their high schools to lead workshops in Islamic spirituality and values (Kerohanian Islam or Rohis). The concept of “Integrated-Islamic schools” (Sekolah Islam Terpadu), which taught both Islamic values and modern subjects grew out of this emphasis on Islamic reform through education. Nurul Fikri was very popular, and by 2000, there were programs in 29 cities throughout Java. In 1997-8, Nurul Fikri claimed to have trained one quarter of the students at the University of Indonesia. After the fall of Suharto, leaders of Nurul Fikri, such as Fahmi Alaydrus and Suharna, joined other dakwah activists in founding the Justice Party.

LDK dakwah activists on university campuses used their institutional base to win control of university student senates (called Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa or BEM after 1998) at almost every major university. Zulkieflimansyah (now a PKS spokesman) was elected as the head of the Student Senate at the University of Indonesia (UI) in 1994. Kamaruddin, former head of the mosque at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik or FISIP) UI, won the election in 1995. Selamat Nurdin, another dakwah activist from FISIP UI, was elected in 1996, followed by Rama Pratama in 1997. In March 1998 as the student movement to topple Suharto gained strength, dakwah activists who were BEM leaders formed the Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia or KAMMI) to bring dakwah groups together in a national organization. KAMMI joined with secular pro-democracy student groups in the Reformasi campaign calling for Suharto step down.

However, there were differences between secular pro-democracy activists and KAMMI leaders. In May 1998, Forum Kota, a radical pro-democracy student organization, wanted to invite the poor to join student demonstrators at the Parliament, but KAMMI leader Rama Pratama objected, fearing that this would trigger riots. The view of KAMMI leaders prevailed. One secular democracy activist complained, “We used Rama because he had a title, but then the media circled around him, and he used us.”

Members say KAMMI is a moral rather than a political movement. The reform of society is to be accomplished through individual commitment to Islamic values. Thus KAMMI does not use the word demonstrasi (demonstration) for its protests, but rather aksi (action). KAMMI demonstrations were noted for their discipline. KAMMI’s first
chairman, Fahry Hamzah explained, “We have a moral stance. If there is a group that desires to cause a disturbance, please, they are welcome to leave our ranks. . . We are able to guard the coordination of mass action of thousands of people. Not just action together in big cities like Jakarta, Bogor, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya, but also actions in smaller cities like Purwokerto and Pasuruan have been implemented by KAMMI in an orderly manner—even in areas that are sensitive to conflict.” The orderly columns of students dressed in white with green scarves protesting against Suharto were a favorite subject of photographers.

For KAMMI the struggle for democracy is a struggle for Islam, because democracy means majority rule, which should lead to an Islamic-oriented government in Indonesia. The organizational structure of KAMMI is authoritarian, based on the cell structure of usroh, which imposes hierarchy and discourages debate and criticism. KAMMI leaders explain that the centralized power structure and disciplined solidarity of their organization is a source of strength, countering the view that student activists are a disruptive force which will only bring conflict and chaos. They cite the concept of wala’ (rendering one’s loyalty and willingness to be led) in support of their style of organization.

As new political opportunities emerged in the 1990s, divisions opened up between the four streams of Islamist dakwah. KAMMI activists joined the movement to bring down Suharto, while DDII/KISDI leaders decided to throw their support behind the New Order. Some activists in the Neo-Salafy stream of dakwah joined with KAMMI in forming a new political party, while others took a more radical position, rejecting democracy as un-Islamic and interpreting jihad as requiring Muslims to struggle for the implementation of Shari‘ah and the establishment of an Islamic government through all means, including violence. When Hizbut Tahrir emerged into the public after the fall of Suharto, it competed with KAMMI to recruit followers on university campuses.

**Islamism and Democracy: Partai Keadilan**

The decision that Indonesia’s first free elections in over 30 years would be held in June 1999 presented leaders of the dakwah movement with a telling question: Should they continue with their efforts to Islamize Indonesian society from the ground up or should they form a political party and attempt to shape the government that would come to power? Some saw the opportunity of forming a political party as the fruit of the long years of dakwah. Others argued that the dakwah movement would be weakened if it were politicized. Dakwah activists were also divided between those who believed that Islam and democracy were compatible and those who did not.

Radical Neo-Salafy groups that rejected democracy stayed underground and engaged in a violent struggle to purify Islam in Indonesia and defend Muslims under attack. Hizbut Tahrir, which rejects democracy and the use of violence, continued in a campaign of Islamist dakwah. Sidney Jones observes that Hizbut Tahrir, which claims to have 100,000 members and chapters in every province, has grown more rapidly than other radical Islamic groups, particularly in South Sulawesi, where Neo-Salafy groups are
On the other side of the democracy divide are the Crescent Moon and Star Party (Partai Bulan Bitang or PBB) established by DDII leaders and the Justice Party (Partai Keadilan or PK), which was established by KAMMI activists. Although PBB won 2% of the vote in the 1999 election, it is associated with the past and shows no signs of growing influence. PK, which won 1.4 percent of the vote and seven seats in the national legislature (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat), emerged as the seventh largest party in 1999. As PK did not meet the 2% threshold that would allow it to participate in the next election, the party reconstituted itself as Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Kedilan Sejahtera or PKS) in April 2003. PKS hoped to more than double its share of the vote in 2004. In actuality, PKS won seven percent of the vote and is now the largest party in the Jakarta province-level legislature. In this, the second major section of the essay, I focus on the Prosperous Justice Party.

**Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (The Prosperous Justice Party)**

The initiative for forming a political party came from KAMMI leaders who emerged as leaders of the Reformasi movement. SIDIK activists, Almuzammil Yusuf and Mahfudz Siddik, organized a poll of over 6,000 students and alumni of the LDK/KAMMI network. With support from 68% of respondents, they proceeded to invite a range of prominent figures in the dawah movement to discuss the establishment of a political party. In July 1998, the decision to form Partai Keadilan (PK) was announced by 52 dawah leaders. This marked a formal split with the older generation of DDII and KISDI (Masyumi) activists, who had established the Crescent Moon and Star Party (Partai Bulan Bintang or PBB). Members of PKS are young (20 to 40 years old) and have a high level of education. PK was also distinguished from the other political parties that participated in the June 1999 election in that it was not associated with any established political figure from either the Old Order of Sukarno or the New Order of Suharto.

Over the last four years, PKS has faced three challenges: 1) First is the need to maintain its image as the party of moral reform while engaged in pragmatic politics. 2) Second is to show that a moderate Islamist party can provide an alternative to radical Islamism. 3) Third is the need to build a base in organized labor and among peasants and the unemployed poor. The party leadership has largely succeeded in meeting the first two of these challenges, but they have not yet found a way to meet the third.

**1) Moral Reform**

PKS has positioned itself as the party of moral reform. As one source put it, “The Justice Party has consistently campaigned for the urgent need of greater morality. The party reiterates time and again that the present chaos in Indonesia is caused primarily by a lack of morality among the nation’s leaders.” The suspicion of politics as divisive and tainted with self interest that is characteristic of political dawah is dealt with through a much quoted analogy: A political party is simply a means like a glass containing water. If the water is poisonous, then politics would be dangerous. But if the glass is filled with the
“honey” of Islam, politics would be the solution to achieving real peace for the people of the world.

In order to preserve a moral distance from the politics of interest and involvement in corruption, PK did not accept government funding for the campaign in 1999. However, PK did accept funding from sources in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. PK also announced that it would not accept a seat in President Abdurrahman’s Wahid’s cabinet and required its chairman, Nur Mahmudi Ismail, to give up membership in the party when he accepted the position of Minister of Forestry and Plantations. This decision should be understood in the context of Indonesian politics, where political leaders use government positions to raise funds (generally through corruption) for their party. PK was also offered a ministerial position in Megawati’s cabinet, and again PK leaders chose to decline on the grounds that they wished to act as a critical opposition. In the 2004 campaign also PKS did not to accept campaign funding from the government.

PKS legislators have become known for their refusal to engage in the corruption that is widespread in provincial and district legislatures. For example, in 2003, the South Sumatra Provincial Legislature voted to disperse Rp. 7.5 billion ($900,000.) from the province’s Operating Fund to the 75 members of the provincial legislature. Each legislator was allotted Rp. 100 million ($12,000.). Only the PK representative refused to take his “cut.” In 2003 PKS has issued a campaign statement entitled “24 Reasons PKS is the Enemy of Slippery Characters” (24 Alasan PKS sebagai Musuk Wong ‘Licik’) with press clippings on PKS representatives who have refused to become involved in corruption.

However, when KAMMI and PK initiated a campaign against President Abdurrahman Wahid for two corruption scandals and his inability to stem the on-going violence in Maluku, critics charged that PK and its supporters in KAMMI were being manipulated by elites associated with the New Order, such as former Finance Minister Fuad Bawazier, who were opposed to reform. PK demonstrations against Megawati for her failure to fight corruption and implement political reforms have led to similar accusations. However, to date concern that the PKS is being manipulated by elites with their own agenda has not grown. PKS is recognized as having the best record of any political party with regard to opposing corruption, and in 2004 PKS also joined the moderate Islamic organizations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, in leading a campaign against corrupt politicians.

2) A Moderate Alternative to Radical Islamism

PKS has had a close relationship with militant Islamist groups. When Christian-Muslim riots broke out in Ambon in January 1999 and spread to other areas of Maluku in eastern Indonesia, KISDI unleashed its most inflammatory rhetoric representing the clashes as a full-scale attack on the Muslim community and calling for jihad. Muhammad Alfian, the leader of HAMMAS in 1999, whom I interviewed at the time, showed me photos from Ambon of houses with painted crosses and the words Israel and Bosnia, which they claimed proved that a MOSAD outpost in Singapore was instigating the
violence. The newly formed PK joined in the protests against the government for its failure to stop the violence and protect Muslims. At the mass jihad rally in Yogyakarta in March 1999, PK supporters in their distinctive uniforms and disciplined formations were prominent participants. PK also published a “white book” claiming that the number of Muslim victims in the Ambon riots far exceeded the number officially given by the police. These actions contributed to legitimating radical Islamic paramilitary groups which took up the call for jihad and exacerbated the conflict.

PKS representatives also joined leaders of radical Islamist organizations—the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia), Laskar Jihad, the Jakarta-based Front for the Defense of Islam (Front Pembela Islam or FPI), HAMMAS and KISDI, in calling for the release of Abu Bakir Ba’asyir, when he was accused of being the leader of Jemaah Islamyiah and arrested after the bombing in Bali in October 2002. PKS took the view that the bombing was most probably the operation of a Western intelligence agency, arguing that Muslims could not have conceived and carried out such an attack. PKS representatives visited Abu Bakir Ba’asyir in the hospital in police custody. Afterwards, Roqib, PKS representative for North Lampung and a graduate of Al Azhar in Egypt, said that Ba’asyir had conveyed the message that ties with the US are haram (forbidden) because the US has been conspiring with Zionist Israel to pressure the faithful.

However, in March 2003 when PKS organized the “Million People March” against the American invasion of Iraq, PKS Chairman Hidayat Nur Wahid was careful to distinguish the American attack on the regime of Saddam Hussein from an attack on Islam and to invite people of all faiths to participate. The march, which was the largest demonstration Jakarta has seen since the fall of Suharto, demonstrated the appeal of Islamist calls to defend Islam and growing anti-Americanism. But Nur Wahid emphasized moral themes in his speech to the demonstrators, arguing that uncritical support for Israel showed that the United States had no concern for the people of Palestine and did not respect moral principles. PKS activists also tried to link the demonstration to the campaign for political reform in Indonesia. One banner proclaimed: “Bush, gangster-ruler of the world; Tomy, our own Winata gangster-rule. Down With Gangerism!” referring to Tomy Winata, a notorious Jakarta figure with connections to the criminal underworld and to elite political figures. The careful framing of the march as a protest against the policy of the America government is one example of the way in which PKS distances itself from radical Islamist groups and the call for jihad against the West in favor of a focus on moral reform based on Islamic principles.

However, there are divisions within PKS that derive from the tension between Islamist goals and a commitment to democracy. For some PKS leaders, such as Fachry Hamzah, a KAMMI leader, who is now a PKS legislator, the party’s true political objective is “a state based on Islamic law.” He has said, “Today democracy is our playing field, but we cannot abandon our religious ambitions.” On the other hand, party chairman Hidayat Nur Wahid, has tried to position PKS as a “centrist Islamic party” that occupies the middle ground between radical Islamist groups that reject democracy and Muslim organizations committed to democracy. In his view Salafy groups are on the
extreme left [sic] because they reject democracy as un-Islamic and are open to the use of violence. Next is Hizbut Tahrir, which also views democracy as un-Islamic but rejects the use of violence. Still on the left are the old Masjumi activists and those who support the Jakarta Charter and would impose Islamic law on Muslims. To the right of PKS are the modernist Muslim organization Muhammadiyah and the traditionalist Nahdatul Ulama, which reject the slogan “Islam is the solution” but struggle for a better society through democratic political means.

PKS’s image as a moderate Islamic party is largely based on the pragmatic way it has engaged in day-to-day politics. In the maneuvering that led up to the selection of a new president by the People’s Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat or MPR) in 1999, PKS joined Poros Tengah [Middle Axis], an alliance of Islamic parties and Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), in opposing the election of Megawati Sukarnoputri, the leader of the Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan or PDI-P). PDI-P had won a plurality of 33.76 percent in the election, but Megawati failed to reach out to the Islamic parties to build a coalition to ensure her election. She was felt to have betrayed the “spirit of Ciganjur,” referring to a meeting in 1998 at which leaders of the Reformasi movement, Abdurrahman Wahid, Amien Rais, and Megawati Sukarnoputri, had agreed to work together. After the election, Megawati seemed to take the position that she could rule without support from other parties. Some elements of Poros Tengah also argued against Megawati on the grounds that Islam does not allow a woman to be a leader if there are qualified men. Poros Tengah succeeded in electing Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) to the presidency. However, in 2000, when President Abdurrahman Wahid was impeached, PKS leaders decided not to oppose the elevation of Vice President Megawati to the presidency on the grounds that constitutionally (and following the logic of democracy) she was the legitimate President.

The moderate pragmatism of PKS leaders is also seen in the coalition between PKS and the National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional or PAN). PAN is identified with Muhammadiyah, but it is a self-declared nationalist party and in 1999 it included non-Muslims in leadership positions. The coalition with PAN disappointed other Islamist parties, but it signaled PKS’s close relationship with PAN chairman Amien Rais, former head of the modernist Islamic organization Muhammadiyah. PKS leaders explained that the coalition provided a political training ground for young PKS cadre. Furthermore, when PK joined PAN in the Reformasi Faction, it became the fifth largest faction in the legislature with 41 seats, surpassing the military faction with 38 seats.

PK joined the Islamist parties protesting President Abdurrahman Wahid’s announcement that he would open diplomatic relations with Israel and his proposal to eliminate the 1966 law banning the Communist Party, but it joined PAN in opposing a return to the Jakarta Charter (Piagam Jakarta), which would impose Islamic law on Indonesian Muslims. PKS leaders explained this decision in various ways. One said that the party took the position that although government according to shari’ah is necessary, first people must support the imposition of Islamic law. Shari’ah imposed by government would be undemocratic. PKS chairman Hidayat Nur Wahid said that PKS was committed to Piagam Madinah (the Madinah Charter), which in his view refers to
concepts found in the Qur’an such as equality, rule of law, justice, and Islamic social services. However, when the issue of the Jakarta Charter was raised again in the legislature in 2000, PKS abstained from voting.

There continues to be tension inside PKS between its commitment to establishing an Islamic government and its commitment to democracy. While the present chairman of the party seems to be firmly committed to democratic reform, there are influential figures in the party who see the democratic process as merely a strategic path to establishing an Islamic government. The structure of the party is not fully democratic because an unelected Advisory Council (Majlis Suroh) plays a central role in directing the party. How pragmatic and committed to democratic reforms the party will be in the future remains uncertain.

3) Building a Broad Base of Support

Like KAMMI, PKS is based on a network of cells where members meet for Qur’an reading and discussion. After socialization, members form new cells, creating a hierarchical structure. Party cadre act as leaders and teachers. PKS is widely perceived to be an exclusive party of student activists and middle class professionals. For example, Jim Schiller observes that in Jepara “the very tiny PKS is led by doctors, its men and women sit separately at rallies which cater more to deepening loyalty than attracting new voters.” Interviews with professors, students, activists and middle class informants in Palembang, Padang, and Semarang provided a similar assessment. Hidayat Nur Wahid responds to this observation by stating that for the present the aim of the party is not to obtain political power but to educate the public through dakwah about what a government based on the moral principles of Islam would look like. He explains that PKS is a cadre party and party leaders do not want to recruit a mass following that does not understand Islamic principles. He maintains that the gap between the rich and poor is not a political issue but a religious problem.

The resistance to class politics and mobilization of the poor and unemployed that characterizes PKS to date seems to grow out of the association of class politics with communism and the left. In Indonesia there is a widespread fear that chaos and anarchy will result if the political passions of class are unleashed, a fear cultivated by the New Order with regular reminders of the violence of 1965. As opposed to class politics, PKS emphasizes the unity of the Muslim community (ummah). Nur Wahid says that so long as PKS upholds Islamic values, such as opposition to corruption and the provision of social services, it can be an effective force for good and change.

Conclusion

Giles Kepel has argued that the peak of political Islam passed with the failure of Islamist regimes that won power in Iran (1979), Sudan (1989), and Afghanistan (1996), to bring greater justice through the implementation of Islamic law. However, in Indonesia Islamism is still a growing force. Widespread frustration with the failure of reform and growing corruption is undermining faith that democracy can bring a better future. A
survey conducted in November 2002 by the Center for Study of Islam and Society (Pusat Penelitian Islam dan Masyarakat) at the State Islamic University in Jakarta showed surprising growth in support for the implementation of shari’ah and strong support for radical Islamist groups. The poll recorded that 71 percent of respondents supported the application of shari’ah by the state to all Muslims and 54 percent said that radical Islamist movements to implement shari’ah, such as the militant Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and Laskar Jihad, must be supported. As many observers have pointed out, there is little clarity on what shari’ah involves; nevertheless these findings should be considered an indication of the growing appeal of the Islamist world view.

Western academics who study Indonesia have consistently argued that the vast majority of Muslims in Indonesia are moderate and liberal in their beliefs, meaning that they consider Islam to be a religion of peace and believe in religious toleration. However, Syafi’i Ma’arif, Chairman of the modernist Islamic organization Muhammadiyah, has warned that Islamist groups could constitute a significant challenge to moderate Islam if democratic reforms fail to bring greater justice: “Actually, the militant movements, which influence young people looking for identity, can only be fought by creating a normal situation, with justice. That’s the source of the problem. So fundamentalism could take root unless we solve these problems.”

The growing appeal of the idea that “Islam is the solution” will not necessarily transfer into effective political action. One reason is the deep divisions among different streams of Islamist dakwah and political rivalries between their leaders. There is no clear agreement over what “Islam is the solution” means and how it provides an answer to the political problems that Indonesia faces.

PKS has emerged as a moderate alternative to radical Islamism. PKS leaders now face the triple challenge of maintaining the party’s reputation as a moral force for change while engaging in practical politics as the leading party in the Jakarta-provincial legislature and enlarging the base of support for the party. The PKS campaign against corruption and its reputation for discipline have attracted support from the middle class; now the party must implement political reforms in Jakarta that demonstrate the commitment to clean government is solid. PKS has sought to win the support of the poor through programs aimed at helping victims of natural disasters, but it has yet to develop an economic program that addresses the needs of the working class, peasantry and the poor. To remain an attractive alternative to radical Islam, PKS must expand its constituency. PKS leaders must also resist extremist voices within the party and outside. If PKS fails to meet these challenges, disillusionment with democracy is certain to swell the ranks of radical groups who reject democracy and are willing to resort to violence.

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3 “A Different Class of Terror” (9) reports a poll showing that 69.38 percent of respondents believe that “the bombing is part of a conspiracy to paint Indonesia as a nest of terrorists.” More than 45 percent of respondents believed that “local terrorists could not have been able to assemble such a powerful bomb as was exploded in Bali.” More than 53 percent of respondents believed that “Indonesia has been targeted by foreigners determined to brand it a nest of terrorists” Tempo, October 22-29, 2002; also see Raymond Bonner, “Indonesians see CIA behind terror talk,” International Herald Tribune, September 25, 2002:5.

4 At http://www.iiee.net, a translation of an interview with Osama Bin Laden contained the following statement, “I have already said that I am not involved in the 11 September attacks in the United States.” Students also brought me articles about a letter purportedly sent by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of the Philippines to President George W. Bush proposing that the eastern islands of Indonesia be joined to the Philippines in an expanded “Christian” country that could dominate Southeast Asia. See “Geger Surat Arroyo” [Arroyo Letter Causes Stir], Republika (October 30, 2002).

5 Many students regard liberal/secular media, such as Tempo, Jakarta Post, Radio 68H, Utan Kayu and the International Crisis Group Reports as tools of America and simply discount any information that comes from them. Therefore they do not believe in Jemaah Islamiyah exists (discussion with Buni Yani and Ali Said Damanik). Also see Greg Barton, “The good, bad and chilling news on Jemaah Islamiah,” The Age (August 8, 2003); Evi Marianai, “U.S. advised to give RI access to Hambali,” Jakarta Post (October 18, 2003).


8 The name of the party is also translated as the Justice and Welfare Party.

9 Azyumardi Azra, “Radikalisasi Salafi Radikal” [Radicalization of Salafi Radicals], Tempo (December 2002).


Nurcholish was said to interpret the message of the Qur’an in a way that secularizes Islam and drains it of essential meaning. The reformist ideas of Nurcholish were dismissed as being “outside Islam.” Nurcholish was also accused of associating with Western imperialist forces, the “Jewish lobby” and news sources—Kompas, a Catholic owned newspaper, and Tempo, the respected secular weekly edited by GoenawanMohamad—that Media Dakwah characterized as opposed to true Islam. A discussion of the attacks on Nurcholish appears in Jurnal Ulumul Qur’an entitled “Nabi Gagal Menjalankan Missinya? (Menguji pemikiran Nurcholish)” [Has the Prophet Failed in his Mission? (Examining the Ideas of Nurcholish)] (December 1992).


The militant name for this dakhwah movement appears to have been taken from Membina Angkatan Mujahid [Building a Force of Defenders of the Faith], a translation into Indonesian by Abu Ridho of Sa’id Hawwa’s Fii afaq al Ta’ālim, an important text of the Muslim Brotherhood. See Damanik (2002):72-3.

Interview with Hermawan Dipoyono, who is now the Chair of the Salman Mosque Committee (February 18, 2003).

Muhammad Ilyas founded Jamaat Tablighi or Society for Propagation of Islam in British India in 1927. Ilyas objected to the idea that Muslims should wait for the state to impose Islam as suggested by Mawdudi. Tablighi is a puritanical reform movement opposed to veneration of saints and tombs and the mystical brotherhoods in India and Pakistan. The most important teachings of the Tabligh movement are contained in “Fadaha’il Amal” (Excellence of Action) by Muhamad Zakaria, translated as Fadila Amal in Indonesian.

Darul Arqam was founded in Malaysia in 1968 by Imam Ashari Muhammad al-Tamimi. In 1994 Darul Arqam was officially banned in Malaysia and Indonesia as heretical. The sect emerged again after the fall of Suharto. They publish a tabloid called Kebenaran (Truth), which can be found in many mosques.


Many of the students studying in the Middle East were sponsored by the Ministry of Religion. Indonesian embassies tried to keep a close eye on these students. When I visited Cairo in 1996, I met with Indonesian students studying at Al Azhar. On the fourth day of my visit, I was invited to
the asrama for students from South Sumatra, where I discovered that the Indonesian Embassy had sent someone to find out who I was.


28 Abu Ridho had been the head of the (Secondary) Students Islamic Study Group (Pelajar Islam Indonesia or PII) in West Java and was active in HMI as a university student in Yogya.


30 Wahabi refers to Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-1792), leader of a puritanical Islamic reform movement in Saudi Arabia. Salafy, which refers to the Prophet and his companions or the first pious generation, is an Islamic movement of the second half of the 19th c. inspired by the writings of the Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897) from Persia, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) from Egypt, and Rashid Rida (1865-1935) from Syria. Salafy teachers also draw on the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah (1268-1328), who distinguished between the realm of Islam and the realm of jahiliyyah (a state of ignorance or barbarism) and called for jihad against “un-Islamic” Muslim rulers (see Kepel (2002): 52, 72-3).

31 Muhammad Qutb, brother of Sayyid Qutb, taught in Saudi Arabia. Abdallah Azzam, a Palestinian who was evicted from the University of Jordan where he had taught and led the youth sector of the Muslim Brothers, went to teach in Jeddah at Abd Al-Aziz University. Osama bin Laden was his student there. Azzam moved to Pshawar in 1984, where he published *Al Jihad*, promoting the idea that jihad in Afghanistan was an obligation for all Muslims and the cause of the Palestinians was the cause of all Muslims. See Kepel (2002):51.

32 See the Al-Irsyad webpage www.alirsyad-alislamy.or.id.


34 In 2000-2002 at the height of violent conflict between Christians and Muslims in Eastern Indonesia, FKASWJ claimed to have 40,000 members, including 10,000 armed paramilitaries in Maluku and Suluwesi. FKASWJ also manages hundreds of Islamic schools (pesantren). Laskar Jihad, the armed wing of FKASWJ, was officially disbanded in the aftermath of the Bali bombing and its website was taken offline.

35 The director of LIPIA, Salim Segaf, appears to be more drawn to the Muslim Brotherhood. (Information from Greg Fealy).


37 Interview with activists at the PKS headquarters, July 10, 2003.

38 Interview with Putut Widjanarko, who was active in Salman Mosque at ITB at the end of the 1980s. See Damanik (2002):129-131.

39 As late as 1996, 66 laborers in a garment factory in West Java were accused of belonging to NII and arrested for spreading “misleading religious belief.” An army officer said that they were part of an attempt by the (outlawed) communist party to infiltrate Islamic groups. John McBeth, “The Ghosts of the Past,” *Far Eastern Economic Review* (February 15, 1996):23.
43 Another sign of the “green turn” of Suharto was the prosecution of the editor of the journal Monitor for blasphemy when he published a poll in which the Prophet Muhammad was in 11th place below Suharto (and the editor of Monitor) as the person readers most admired. For militant Islamic groups, Monitor embodied Catholic wealth and influence.
47 In 1999-2000, 120,000 copies of each issue of Sabili were printed. According to an AC Nielsen rating, Sabili ranked second after the magazine Gadis (rather like Mademoiselle) as the most widely read magazine in Indonesia. See Damanik (2002):158-60; 205-6.
49 Sabili, April 21, 1999.
50 Sabili (September 1, 1999):36.
52 Sabili (September 8, 1999):62.
55 Scott (1998):47
56 Schwarz (1999):396.
57 Interview with Muhammad Alfian, leader of HAMMAS, in Jakarta (August 11, 1999). M. Alfian claimed that HAMMAS did not join the paramilitary groups Furkon or Pam Swakarsa in attacks on student demonstrators, because his followers were more “rational” than these groups.
59 Van Bruinessen writes, “In retrospect, present Muslim student activists speak as if a unitary and coherent movement, which they call the Tarbiyah movement, took shape in the 1980s. It is hard to say whether anything as coherent as that ever existed, but it is true that tarbiyah, education, or perhaps indoctrination, came to replace overt political activism after 1978” (2002:10-11). According to Laksamana.Net the Tarbiyah movement was an effort to co-opt the dakwah movement which was funded by Saudi sources: “Tarbiyah established a strong following among students linked to the Association of Inter-Campus Muslim Student Action (HAMMAS) and KAMMI. Financial support for the Tarbiyah movement tends to reflect its Arab origins, specifically through Indonesian Arabic groupings including the Al Irsyad Foundation, which runs Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) across the country. Fuad Bawazir, Finance Minister in Suharto’s last cabinet, known to be still close to the former president’s family and circle, is


Initially KAMMI appears to have been open to an alliance with activists from DDII and KISDI. Lt. Gen. Prabowo, who had a close relationship with “hardline” Islamic leaders, was invited to speak at KAMMI’s founding conference but he was unable to attend. After this point, KAMMI leaders maintained a distance from KISDI.


According to one report PK was formed by young dakwah leaders when they were not included in the formation of PBB. Damanik (2002):339.

The first president of PKS was Nur Mahmudi Ismail (37 years), who left the party when he was made Minister of Forestry and Agriculture by President Abdurrahman Wahid in 2000. He was replaced by Hidayat Nur Wahid (40 years). Nur Mahmudi Ismail, completed a B.Sc. at the Institut Pertanian Bogor (1984) and an M.Sc. and Ph.D. (1994) in Food and Technology Sciences from Texas A & M University. Hidayat Nur Wahid, studied at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, and was awarded a scholarship to Universitas Islam Madinah in Saudi Arabia, where he received a BA, MA, and a Ph.D. in 1992. Damanik (2002):261-4.

PKS chose as its presidential candidate Didin Hafidhuddin, the head of a pesantren and former rector of an Islamic university, who was little known outside of dakwah circles.


When newspapers picked up the story, the resulting scandal forced most of the legislators to return the funds. “Anggota DPRD Sumsel Jadi Tersangka” [Legislators Accused], Sriwijaya Post, (April 23, 2003); “Legislators Implicated, Tempo (May 5, 2003):3.

Fuad Bawazier, Finance Minister under Suharto, defended himself against accusations of funding demonstrations saying that because he heads the alumni wing of HMI, he is frequently asked to support student activities. Eggy Sudjana of KISDI denied funding demonstrations but admitted to advising students and providing “snacks and drinking water for demonstrators.” Dini Djalal, “Indonesia’s Powerful Student Movement Divided” Far Eastern Economic Review (March 22, 2001); “US Policy puts Muslim World on Edge,” Laksamana.net (September 20, 2002).


“NU-Muhammadiyah Akan Perangi Korupsi” [NU-Muhammadiyah to Make War on Corruption], Kompas (October 15, 2003).


Suripto, a PKS leader who served as Secretary General of the Forestry Ministry under (former PKS Chairman) Nur Mahmudi Ismail and worked in Intelligence before that, maintained that a foreign intelligence agency was behind the Bali bombing. The PKS webpage (http://www.keadilan) featured articles in support of Suripto’s accusation. Also see Republika: “Mengkaji Kasus Suripto” [Examining the Case of Suripto] (November 28, 2002); “Fakta Baru Bom Bali” [New Facts about the Bali Bomb] (November 29, 2002); “Hegemoni AS dan Skenario Antiterorisme” [American Hegemony and the Anti-terrorism Scenario] (December 19, 2002).

“Indonesia’s Ba’asyir Tells Hospital Visitors Ties with USA Are Against Religion,” BBC Website (October 31, 2002).

Interview with Hidayat Nur Wahid at PKS headquarters (July 10, 2003).

While Hizbut Tahrir officially rejects the use of violence, the head of Hizbut Tahrir, Ismail Ysanto, has publicly said that the use of violence in defense of Islam is permitted.


Comment to Indonesianist email list managed by Ed Aspinall (February 18, 2003).

