

Moderate Islam as New Identity in Indonesian Foreign Policy: Between Global Role Aspiration and Co-Religious Solidarity

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Abstract. President SBY's statement that Indonesia is "a country where democracy, Islam and modernity go hand in hand" has underpinned new identity in Indonesia's foreign policy as a Moderate Islam country. Despite often claim to be the world's largest community of Muslim, this is the first time Islam in terms of moderate, entered in glossary of Indonesia's foreign policy as formative factor. While in previous era Islam was insignificant and played less substantial role in Indonesia's foreign policy, this paper seeks to scrutinise why is the moderate Islam openly articulated as part of Indonesia's national identity? What are the purposes of the new foreign policy project in regard to the domestic tension at home and in relations with other Islamic countries and the rest of the world? This paper argues that the democratic moderate Islam identity is important in two ways. First, it is a part of the struggle to mainstreaming the moderate view in the continuing "intra-clash" among the radical and moderate Islam in Indonesia. Secondly, the new identity is put in place to aspire bigger role if not a leadership in international affairs by selling the model of democracy-moderate Islam nexus. The efficacy of this new identity, however will depend on the ability to manage the tension and conflict at home and abroad without fall into blinded coreligionist solidarity interest.

Keywords: *Indonesia's foreign policy, moderate Islam.*

Introduction

Among recent changes in Indonesian foreign policy that attract considerable attention is the declaration of Indonesia's

new identity as a democracy and moderate Islam country. It is under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who won first direct presidential election in 2004, the new identity has begun. In his first foreign policy speech Yudhoyono introduced his metaphor “navigating a turbulent ocean” to describe the challenges facing Indonesian foreign policy. He also underlined the importance of Indonesia’s international identity as “a country where democracy, Islam and modernity go hand in hand”. The President’s speech becomes the first underpinning to transform Indonesia’s new national identity as well as forging international image.

In fact, although often claim to be the world’s largest community of Muslim (87% of 237.6 million population)¹ this is the first time Islam in terms of moderate, entered in glossary of Indonesia’s foreign policy as formative factor. In the previous era the role of Islam was insignificant and never played a substantial role in Indonesia’s foreign policy. Leo Suryadinata for example found that the fear of Islamic fundamentalism in domestic politics become the major reason for Indonesia to dwell in Islamic identity. Aspired to be the leader of the Non-Alignment Movement separated Indonesia from the Islamic world.² In a similar vein, Banyu Perwita showed that Islam under Suharto, instead of become the crucial societal input in foreign policy making, has been neglected and manipulated as justifier in managing domestic politics.

Rizal Sukma, a prominent Indonesian scholar and heads the international relations committee of Muhammadiyah, the second largest Indonesia’s Muslim social organisation, remarks that this new identity is becoming a significant breakthrough, a middle way of the dilemma of dual identity in Indonesia’s

¹Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia (Indonesia’s Statistic Bureau), http://www.bps.go.id/aboutus.php?tabel=1&id_subyek=12, downloaded 10 may 2011.

² Leo Suryadinata, ‘Islam and Suharto’s Foreign Policy; Indonesia, the Middle East and Bosnia’, *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXV, no. 3, March 1995.

foreign policy.³ The intention to project moderate Islam as new international image also can be seen as an asset in moderating tone between the Muslim countries and the rest of the world. Similarly, another Indonesian well-known scholar, Dewi Fortuna Anwar argues that Indonesia will provide an alternative model of a modern Islamic society and play important role in mediating international conflicts that involving Muslim interest and Islamic symbols.⁴

The ongoing new identity projected by the Yudhoyono's government reflects the dynamic change in Indonesia's foreign policy. This new development directly related to the domestic politics constellation and the changing of international environment such as September 11 and US's sponsored war on terror. It is important to note that Islam politics in Indonesia is far from being coherent and monolithic form. There always competitions and contests in interpreting religious symbols, defining state's institutions and perception towards international affairs among diverse political Islam groups in Indonesia.

Since Islam becomes important social and political forces, it is of the interest of this essay to scrutinise why is the moderate Islam openly articulated as part of Indonesia's national identity? What are the purposes of the new foreign

³ Dilemma of dual identity is a situation in which the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim and Islam has been serving as a source of norms and values in majority's life. On the other hand Indonesia also featured by ethnic, culture and religious plurality. The state obliged to compromise the aspiration of the Muslims as majority and other religious minority. Since independence the ambiguity identity of Indonesia captured in a statement that "Indonesia is not a theocratic state neither a secular state, but somewhere between the two". See Rizal Sukma, *Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy*, Routledge Curzon, London, 2003. Also see Rizal Sukma, 'Islam and Foreign Policy in Indonesia: Internal Weakness and the Dilemma of Dual Identity', the Asia Foundation Working Paper Series, no. 11, September 2009. Also see, Rizal Sukma, 'Political Change, Foreign Policy and Parliamentary Diplomacy', speech delivered at 3rd annual CDI Indonesia-Australia Parliamentary Committee Forum, Jakarta 3 July 2008.

⁴ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, 'Foreign Policy, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia', *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 3, 2010.

policy project in regard to the domestic tension at home and in relations with other Islamic countries and the rest of the world? This essay argues that the democratic moderate Islam identity is a part of the struggle to mainstreaming the moderate view in the continuing “intra-clash” among the radical and moderate Islam in Indonesia. Moreover, the new identity is put in place to aspire bigger role if not a leadership in international affairs by selling the model of democracy-moderate Islam nexus. Yet, this kind of political leverage to gain a formidable international stature depends on the ability to manage the tension and conflict at home and abroad without fall into blinded coreligionist solidarity interest.

The Struggle for Moderate Islam

It is widely claimed that Indonesian Islam, in general, is a moderate and accommodative in compare to a rigid Middle Eastern Islam. Indonesia Islam also has a certain distinction in many ways compatible with plurality, democracy, modernity.⁵ Nevertheless, it is not easy to define the Islamic community and Islamic interest since it is not a single-unitary political entity. Islam in Indonesia has been dispersed into dichotomous communities based on ideological line, such as modernists or traditionalist and radicals or moderates. The questions that arise against this backdrop are how moderate is Islam in Indonesia? Under what circumstances have the moderate embodied the identity of Indonesian Islam polity?

The idea of moderate Islam becomes a popular public discourse after the rise of radical Islam and terrorist group during the last decade. The definition of moderate, however, is still being debated relating to the characteristic of who deserves to be the moderate. It is commonly acknowledged that

⁵ For example, see Azyumardi Azra, *Indonesia, Islam and Democracy: Dynamic in Global Context*, ICIP, Equinox, The Asia Foundation, Jakarta-Singapore, 2006. See also Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2000.

moderate Islam is characterised by tolerant, modern, progressive, pro-democratic, close to secular and anti-violence (anti-*Jihad*) tenets in religion practises as well as social and political life.⁶ Those who are not practising any of the attributes, then simply categorised as radical or fundamental. Ed Hussain, however, contend that the binary split between moderate and radical in some ways insinuates the moderate is not the true Islam, while at the same time the radicals will easily claims as the genuine Muslims. Rather than moderate, according to Hussain, the right term is the “normal”.⁷ Similarly, John L. Esposito warns that the definition of the moderate Islam would depend on the political-religious affiliation of somebody who makes judgement. Just like other religions, Islam consists of not only the progressive, the modernist and the liberal, but also the conservative and the traditionalist. Thus, what the so-called moderate Islam is the majority of the Muslims who work inside the society and reject the use of violence, terrorism and other extreme religious means.⁸

The identity of Indonesian Islam is hardly separated from the relationship between Islam and the state or Islam and politics. It is forged in the long historical journey of competition to influence the political, social, cultural and economic life of the society. Indeed, as Clifford Geertz suggested, the political Islam in Indonesia should be understood in terms of conflict between the *Santri* (devout Muslim), *Abangan* (nominal Muslim) and *Priyayi* (elites) to

⁶ See for example, Ariel Cohen, ‘Power or Ideology: What the Islamist Choose will Determine Their Future’, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2005, pp. 1-5.

⁷ Ed Hussain, ‘Don’t Call Me Moderate, Call me Normal’, *The Wall Street Journal*, 1 September 2010.

⁸ John L. Esposito, ‘Moderate Muslims: A Mainstream of Modernist, Islamist, Conservatives and Traditionalist’, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, no. 22, vol. 3, 2005, pp. 11-13.

become politically dominant.⁹ Islamic organisations have been founded in the early of 20th century. The two most important Islamic organizations, Muhammadiyah formed in 1912 as a reformist-modernist Islamic organisation, while Nahdatul Ulama established in 1926 as a conservative response to it. Since the early of independence, the fundamental issue for Indonesia as a plural country with Islam as a predominant religion has been how to put Islam in the right position of the state's structure. *Pancasila*¹⁰ (five foundations), however, was chosen to become the fundamental foundation of the state as a compromise between the nationalist who support the identity of the newborn state should not be defined in terms of any religion and Islamist groups who demand a formal Islamic form of the state. The identity of the state perceives as lies somewhere between theocracy and secularism. This ambiguous identity becomes the main departure of the ongoing debate on the relation between Islam and the state that persist until now.¹¹

During the Suharto era political Islam was managed cautiously controlled and marginalised. Although Islamic groups were close alliance in the struggle of power to crush the Communist Party, in the subsequent step to consolidate the New Order regime political Islam was undermined ideologically and institutionally. All Islamic parties that flourished during the early phase of independence era were forced to merge into single party, the *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (United

⁹ See Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, The University of Chicago Press, 1960.

¹⁰ *Pancasila* comprises a five fundamental principles within which the state should be based on; belief in one God, humanism, nationalism, consultation and consensus and social welfare.

¹¹ In the early version of the preamble of Indonesia's constitution that known as Jakarta Charter, there was a statement that espouse the obligation of the Islam follower to carry out the *sharia*. In the short time before proclamation of independence the clause was removed from the preamble and the body of the constitution. It is why among the Islamic leaders felt that they were being betrayed. The most important party which supported the Jakarta Charter was *Masyumi* party. For detail see, Rizal Sukma, *Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy*, pp. 18-20.

Development Party)¹² and to accept the *Pancasila* as the sole official ideology instead of Islam. The de-politicising of political Islam was mostly caused by the potency of the large Islamic society as the challenger of the army who backed up the New Order regime.

In the late of 1980s Indonesia saw a revival of Islam as an important social force. This had much to do with the changing of Indonesian society such as the growth of urban population, the development of middle classes and the dramatic rise of education level. The demographic changing was also accompanied by the flourish of new educated Islamic leaders that brought a sense of Islamic vision with Indonesian expression rather than identified themselves with transnational Islam movement. Among other important leaders were Abdurrahman Wahid of *Nahdatul Ulama* (NU), Amien Rais of *Muhammadiyah* and Nurcholis Madjid a former leader of Muslim Student Association and Liberal Islamic leader (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam*, HMI). The result was that the ultimate stream in Indonesia's Islam resurgence was moderate socially and politically, not radical or conservative.

The Suharto regime responded the emergence of Islamic middle class by changing its policy from marginalisation to accommodation and tried to re-build political coalition with Islam. It is important to note that the shift towards accommodation was related to Suharto's need to build a new political coalition due to the declining support from the military.¹³ At first Suharto tried to co-opt the moderate Muslim leaders among two important social-religious groups, the NU and the Muhammadiyah. In the next step, the new relationship

¹² Among other parties that have been forced to merge were PSII (Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia), NU Party, PERTI, and Parmusi party.

¹³ The military began to criticise Suharto when Suharto swung his alliance closer towards the politico-business groups. The military also criticised the expansion of Soeharto's children business. See, Richard Robison & Vedi R Hadis, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in the Age of Markets*, Routledge, London, 2004

between Islam and the New Order regime mounted in the establishment of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia*, ICMI) in December 1990 led by B.J. Habibie.¹⁴ Not least, Suharto began to promote his personal piety by doing pilgrimages to Mecca.

The establishment of ICMI raised controversies and debates. It was seen differently by elements of Indonesian society. For the Christian minority, the ICMI perceived as a new attempts to turn Indonesia back to Islamic state, while other Muslim groups took ICMI as political tool of Suharto in the struggle of power among New Order regime proponents.¹⁵ It was not surprised, some Islamic group mainly Nahdatul Ulama and some elements of the military strongly criticised the creation of ICMI. For Abdurrahman Wahid of NU, the ICMI was controlled by the militants and the fundamentalist, while the military around the nationalist-secular perceived it a potential threat for stability and national unity.¹⁶ In the middle of 1990's there was friction among ICMI leadership, flamed by the introduction of "succession" discourse brought by Amien Rais, the head of expert council of ICMI that also the leader of Muhammadiyah.

¹⁴ ICMI played an important role in the expansion of Islamic tendency policy such as the introduction of Islamic Court, the Compilation of Islamic law, Islamic *Sharia* banks and the lifting of prohibition against wearing veils in public school. Among the leaders of ICMI was appointed to hold high rank offices such as ministerial and other strategic position. ICMI also established a think tank, the Centre of Information and Development Studies, as well as the *Republika* newspaper. In short, with ICMI as a locomotive Islam was becoming more assertive in the economic and political sphere. See, AA. Banyu Perwita, 'Islam "Symbolic Politics", Democratization and Indonesian Foreign Policy', *Centro Argentino de Estudios Internacionales*, 1999, www.caei.com.ar/es/programas/asia/04.pdf, downloaded 5 May 2010.

¹⁵ William Liddle, 'The Islamic Turn: a Political Explanation', *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 55, no. 3, 1996.

¹⁶ For example the military initiated by Gen. Edy Sudrajat established the Intellectual's Association for the Advancement of Pancasila (*Persatuan Cendekiawan Pembangunan Pancasila*, PCPP) AA. Banyu Perwita, 'Islam "Symbolic Politics", Democratization and Indonesian Foreign Policy', p. 12-13.

When the Muslim leadership among moderate mainstream proved uncooperative, in the period between 1994 and 1998, Suharto began his courtship to ultraconservative Islam mainly towards two groups, the Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication (*Devan Dakwah Islam Indonesia*, DDII)¹⁷ and the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World (*Komite Indonesia Untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam*, KISDI). The two groups slow but sure became the embryo of the “neo-fundamentalism” in Indonesia’s Muslim.¹⁸ The turn to political Islam affected the struggle for power in the ruling party, Golkar, between the nationalist-Christian-Muslim nominal camps versus the “green” wing around the military and the party, mounted in the triumph of pro-Habibie forces in Golkar at the congress on July 1998. Many of the nationalist-secular wings, after the defeat, left Golkar. The collaboration between the conservative groups and Islamist wing of the armed forces used propaganda using anti-Chinese, anti-Christian, and anti-US and Zionism as the enemy against Indonesia and Islam. This realignment of Suharto, the Islamist wing of the military and the fundamental Islam groups, however failed to defend Suharto position and he forced to step down in May 1998, but still continued under the Habibie as auxiliaries of the police and army.

Thus, the dynamic of Suharto political control towards Islam politics has produced two different strands of Indonesian political Islam culture that has a profound implication to political Islam in the democratisation era. First, the largest group, led by many educated Muslims that develop a more open, tolerant and pluralistic approach regarding the

¹⁷ DDII founded in 1967 as the evolution of Masyumi Party (Islamic Party in Sukarno era which support the Jakarta Charter). While adopted the non-cooperation with the government, the senior leadership of Masyumi worked for the religious predication program. The DDII maintain its position to create conservative Islamic constituency.

¹⁸ Robert W. Hefner, ‘Global Violence and Indonesian Muslim Politics’, *American Anthropologist*, vol. 104, no. 3, 2002, pp. 756-757.

relationship between state and Islam. This moderate-pluralist camp emphasises a more substantive discourse of Islam rather than the symbolic-formal necessity to establish an Islamic state and a *sharia* law. The main pillar of the moderate group revolves around the two largest mass Islam organisations, Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Hefner identifies it as the *civil-pluralist Islam* group that seek to create a rapprochement between Western ideas of equality, freedom and democracy within modern Muslim ideals.¹⁹

In addition, there are also small groups, firstly nurtured by the regime that pursues a more formal-legalistic approach toward the establishment of Islamic state, or at least a *sharia* law. This view revolves around the Islamist parties²⁰ and the neo-fundamental Muslim paramilitary groups such as *Front Pembela Islam* (Islamic Defence Front, FPI), *Forum Komunikasi Ahlusunah Wal Jamaah/ Laskar Jihad* (Communication Forum of the Follower of the Sunnah and The Community of Prophet/ Jihad Militia, FKAJW/ LJ) and *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (Indonesian Mujahidin Council/ MMI), *Jamaah al-Ikhwān al-Muslimin* (JAMI), *Hizbut Tabrir* Indonesia (HTI) and other smaller groups. It is clear that there has been little consensus among the two camps on what Islam would take form in Indonesia.

The 1999 election, just like in the early independence era, once again became the first critical competition in the democratic era between the nationalist-secular parties and the Islamist parties. The election result showed only 13 percent

¹⁹ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*,

²⁰ Among other important Islamic parties are, PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan/ United Development Party*), PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa/ National Awakening Party*), PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera/ Justice and Welfare Party*), PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional/ National Mandate Party*) and PBB (*Partai Bulan Bintang, the Crescent Moon and Star Party*). PKB and PAN often disregard as Islamist party, although PKB mass base is NU and PAN mass base is Muhammadiyah. The two parties are moderate-pluralist Islamic parties since the membership of the party is open wide for other religious affiliation.

votes for overall Islamic parties compare to 76 percent for nationalist-secular-pluralist parties. Nevertheless, the radical Muslim groups, in the first five years of democratisation era, had vast public leverage compare to their actual number in the society.²¹ At the same time the moderate and pro democratic Islam seemed to be weak and segmented in the face of the fundamentalists. This had much to do with the legacy of Suharto era that left fierce political struggle between the old guard and the reformist. There are at least three cases that highlight the growing out of control the radical Muslims groups. First, the case of communal conflict in Ambon showed how the radical Muslim groups openly defied the government authority to handle the communal conflict.²² Second, the reaction of the radical Muslim groups to the case of September 11, the war on terror and US invasion to Afghanistan clearly depicted their influence to Indonesia's domestic politics. Following the US attacked Afghanistan; the Jihad Militia (LJ) and Islamic Defenders front (FPI) urged their follower sweeping the hotels and tourist centres that targeted to the Western visitors as a way to show their solidarity to Muslim world.

On the other hand, the Megawati government seemed wary to join in the US led War on Terror. More ironically, the Vice President Hamzah Haz (from PPP party) made a statement that the terrorist attack to the WTC is to clean America's sins. Haz also refuse to acknowledge that Indonesia

²¹ In the 1999 election only three Islamic parties won significant percentage; the PPP, 11 percent, the PBB, 2% and the PK (the former name of PKS), 1 %. See Saiful Mujani and William R. Liddle, 'Politics, Islam and Public Opinion', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2004

²² For the radical groups, at least the Jihad Militia, communal conflict in Ambon clearly a conflict between Christian and Muslim. After several demonstrations and propagandas, the Jihad Militia led by Jafar Umar Thalib announced plans to send more than 2,000 jihad fighters to battle against the Christian in Ambon. The old guard elite supported the Jafar's campaign in Ambon with the flow of fund and arms to destabilise the new democratic government. See, Robert W. Hefner, 'Global Violence and Indonesian Muslim Politics', p. 760.

might become the safe haven of the terrorist group such as *Jemaah Islamiyah*. One argument behind the half-hearted Indonesia's support on the war on terror was that the government tried to contain of the increase of domestic support towards those radical groups as well as to safe their seats among the Islamic constituent.²³ The government position, then changed after the October 2002 Bali bombing, followed by serial bombing in 2003-2009, including the two times of JW Marriot hotel and Australian Embassy in Jakarta. The government started openly acknowledge the presence of the radical and militant groups and perceive it as serious source of threats.

Along with the democratic consolidation process, the secular-moderate Islam political parties now dominate the Indonesian politics. It is proven by the result of parliamentary election in 2004 and 2009 in which the total vote for secular parties is 65% in 2004 and 70% in 2009 compare to total vote to Islamist parties which is 15% in 2004 and 13% in 2009.²⁴ The explanation towards secularisation of Indonesian politics for some parts is due to the changing behaviour of the voters strongly lean towards a more moderate tone of Islamic values.²⁵ Moreover, the later election showed transformation of Islamist parties towards a "normalisation of Islamist party politics".²⁶ The transformation is displayed by the changing appearance of Islamist parties (particularly PKS and PPP) to become more similar to other secular parties in terms of campaign messages and inclusive political strategies in order to seek broader

²³ Azumardi Azra, 'Challenge of Political Islam to Megawati', *The Jakarta Post*, 21 November 2001.

²⁴ Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, 'Muslim Indonesia's Secular Democracy', *Asian Survey*, vol. XLIX, No.4, 2009.

²⁵ Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, 'Muslim Indonesia's Secular Democracy', pp. 588-589.

²⁶ Thomas B. Pepinsky, Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, 'Indonesian Democracy and the Transformation of Political Islam', paper presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Philadelphia.

political support. In the same tone, Amy L. Freedman argues that, democracy in Indonesia so far has a moderating influence on many Islamic groups.²⁷

It does not mean that the contest between the moderate and the radical is resolved. Both are groups still struggling to win the heart and mind of the society. Although it is clear that the moderate groups outnumber the radical groups, the latter still operated in the fringes of the society to influence the nature of the debate over the role of the religion and politics and gain support from the conservative Islamic groups. The recent surge of *Sharia* law in many provincial and district administrations clearly indicates that the conservative-radical influences cannot be discounted. They also still have strong sway to the government over the case of Ahmadiyah and other inter-religion violence.

The explanation above indicates that the contestation among different groups, defined as moderate and radical-conservative, is still remaining. It has become part of “normal” politics in Indonesia, while the answer may need a long journey of dialectic process. To a certain degree, it is not overstate to define Islam Indonesia as moderate. The announcement of moderate Islam as Indonesian identity, therefore, can be understood as a constructive approach to mainstreaming the moderate Islam view in shaping the institutions, national interest and Indonesia’s action in international affairs. The fact that there is still vigorous debate over the relation between the religion and the state may indicate that the moderate Islam is still being absorb into the polity.

Moderate Islam in Foreign Policy; More Global Role Aspiration than Co-Religious Solidarity?

The recent global terrorism phenomenon which often associated with radical Muslims of Al Qaeda network affects

²⁷ Amy L. Freedman, ‘Political Viability, Contestation and Power: Islam and Politics in Indonesia and Malaysia’, *Politics and Religion*, vol. 2, 2009.

the discourse of moderate Islam. Amidst the resurgence of radical-extreme Islam, the idea of “the fundamental-militant Islam is the problems and the moderate is the solution” accepted throughout the globe.²⁸ Along with the Western government policy to encourage and empower the moderate, many Islamic groups and countries identified themselves with the moderate.²⁹ Among other Islam majority population countries, Indonesia and Malaysia march toward moderate Islam identity.

It should be noted that one of the most important continuities in Indonesian foreign policy is ambition as regional power and as a global player.³⁰ The Indonesian foreign policy doctrine, free and active (*bebas dan aktif*) guides the conduct of Indonesian foreign policy to find a different way in the world (not neutral or align with one of the power bloc) and become the subject of its own history not the object of other country.³¹ The large size of the country with rich natural resources become the factor that push the Indonesian elite to believe that Indonesia entitle a prominent role in the world. During Soekarno era, free and active was interpreted as an instrument to grasp leadership among post-colonial countries as well as a tool to manage domestic politics. Under Soeharto reign, although foreign policy was mostly influenced by economic interest, Indonesia identified itself as the leader of Non-Alignment Movement and ASEAN.

The Asian economic crisis that robbed Indonesian economic status and the serial terrorism bombing deteriorated

²⁸ Daniel Pipes, ‘Identifying Moderate Muslims’, *New York Sun*, 23 November 2004.

²⁹ Steven A. Cook, ‘The Myth of Moderate Islam’, *Foreign Policy*, June 16, 2008.

³⁰ Paige Johnson Tan, ‘Navigating Turbulence Ocean: Indonesia’s Worldview and Foreign Policy’, *Asian Perspective*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2007.

³¹ This doctrine inspired from the metaphor made by Vice President Hatta in the Cold War context, rowing between two reefs. Paige Johnson Tan, ‘Navigating Turbulence Ocean: Indonesia’s Worldview and Foreign Policy’, p. 151-152.

Indonesia's international image. Indonesia's status dropped dramatically from high performing economic country to pariah country, from relatively stable and secure country to the hotbed of terrorism. Still under the principle of free and active policy with little modification on the metaphor,³² Indonesia under Yudhoyono also has a global role ambition. The justification now is Indonesia moderate Islam as a model for the rest of the world. In the foreign ministry's 60th anniversary in 2005 Yudhoyono stated;

Speaking about changes, people usually faced with three options; whether they should be part of the change, follow the change or lead the change. Indonesia, God willing, surely cannot only be a follower in the changing world but, as former President Sukarno and others showed us, we should be able to lead on certain issues in international relations. This is our ultimate goal...³³

Compare to Malaysia, Indonesia's identification with moderate Islam is a little left behind. Openly declared as Islamic country, Malaysia retain its state's version of Islam against the "deviant" around the opposition party (PAS, Islamic Party of Malaysia), and outlaw the radical and the militant groups such as the KKM (Organisation of Militant Malaysia), one of the wing of *Jamaah Islamiyah*. It is obvious however, Malaysia utilised the status of moderate Islam as legitimate effort to weaken the Islamic political opposition. While the opposition is forced to be more radical (than the state's Islamic version) to appeal the people, Malaysia decision to join the war on terrorism and build a closer cooperation with the US once again becomes the

³² Susilo Bambang Yudoyono's metaphor Navigating Turbulence Ocean is seen as a modification of Hatta's metaphor rowing between two reefs. See, Bantarto Bandoro, 'Navigating turbulent sea', *The Jakarta Post*, 1 February 2007.

³³ Ivy Susanti, 'Indonesia 'must play leading global role'', *The Jakarta Post*, 20 August, 2005.

effective rule to demoralize the radical groups by linking them to terrorist.³⁴

Megawati government lukewarm reaction to the war on terrorism and lack of action against the radical Muslim groups affected the image of Indonesian Islam from international point of view. Although Megawati became tougher toward the radicals in the post of Bali bombing by issuing the anti-terrorism law, international community, especially the US still perceived that Indonesia has not done maximum efforts to diminish the radicals. The US's view had much to do with the Indonesia's criticism on the US invasion to Afghanistan and Iraq. Soon after enacting the new international identity Yudhoyono, targeted the US as the first Indonesia's public relations exercise. In the meeting with President George W Bush in Bogor Indonesia in 2006, Yudhoyono declined the call to immediate withdrawal of US from Iraq. Moreover, Yudhoyono offered a "three Rs" formula as the solution of the Iraq problem; reconciliation among factions in Iraq, replacement the US forces by Muslim-coordinated coalition under the UN auspices and reconstruction.³⁵ Whereas President Bush stated, "Indonesia is the example of how democracy and modernisation can present an alternative to extremism".³⁶ Apparently, the US paradigm changed overnight by referring Indonesia as the beacon of moderate Muslim democracy, as tolerant brand of Muslim as an important ally among Islamic population countries.

The new effort has shown important results. Indonesia was elected to a rotating seat on the UN Security Council in 2006. Moreover Indonesia also began to see the opportunity of

³⁴ Amy L. Freedman, 'Political Viability, Contestation and Power: Islam and Politics in Indonesia and Malaysia', pp. 105-108.

³⁵ Embassy of The Republic of Indonesia 'President Bush Meets with President Yudhoyono of Indonesia', <http://www.embassyofindonesia.org/ina-usa/statement/persconfbushsby06.htm>, downloaded 10 May 2011.

³⁶ Ann Marie Murphy, 'Indonesia Return to the International Stage: Good News for the United States', *Orbis*, winter 2009, p. 74.

its identity as a soft power to become an alternative model for other Muslim societies as well as a bridge for mutual understanding between the Western countries and the Islamic world. In several meeting with US secretary state, the British Prime Minister, the Dutch Prime Minister and EU high representative for Common Security and Foreign Policy in 2006, Indonesia confidently avowed to play a role in mediating the conflict in Middle East.³⁷

Indonesia then involves in a new role as peacemaker in the Islamic world.³⁸ Indonesia records in contributing peace efforts in Cambodia, southern Philippines as well as solving Muslim separatist in Aceh province become significant modalities. In April 2007 Indonesia hosted a gathering of Sunni and Shiite clerics and scholars as part to reconcile among conflicting factions of Iraq and Iran.³⁹ Furthermore, Indonesia has been approached by a number of Western countries and also the Israeli government to approach the new Hamas government to convince it to moderate its position.⁴⁰ At his visit to Jakarta, President Mahmoud Abbas of Palestine also urged Indonesia to participate in Annapolis meeting, hosted by President Bush in 2007, to discuss Israel-Palestine problems.⁴¹ In addition Indonesia military also joined the UN Peace Keeping force in Southern Lebanon in 2006 under the UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) mission, as the first from Muslim country that involve the mission.

In seek to a deeper engagement with Islamic countries in 2006 President Yudhoyono visited five Arab states, Saudi

³⁷ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, 'Foreign Policy, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia', pp. 45-46.

³⁸ Donald Greenlees, 'Indonesia courts role as peacemaker in the Muslim World', *The New York Times*, 21 May 2007.

³⁹ 'Indonesia Hosts Sunni-Shiite Meeting', <http://www.worldbulletin.net/index.php?aType=haberArchive&ArticleID=3095>, downloaded 10 May 2011.

⁴⁰ 'Indonesia: Muslim bridge-builder?' <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/7269017.stm>, downloaded 10 May 2011.

⁴¹ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, 'Foreign Policy, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia', p. 51.

Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UEA and Jordan. In the visitation Yudhoyono expected to forge closer economic links between the petrodollar countries and Indonesia. At this point there is mutual need, on the one hand Indonesia needs alternative foreign capital inflow to finance economic development, while on the other hand many Arab states also seek for another places to invest their capital in the wake of September 11 terrorist attack that troubled their investment towards Western countries.⁴²

However, Indonesia ability to play peacemaker in Islamic World and bridge builder between the West and Islamic world constrained by several factors. First, Indonesian role despite of the status as the largest Muslim nation still neglected and perceived as marginal among Islamic countries. Indonesia also so far plays a marginal role in the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC).⁴³ Moreover many Arab countries maintain to underrate Indonesia's Islamic qualifications as outpost. This becomes an explanation on why the Sunni-Shiite conference in 2006 was not considered as full success since some Iraqi and Iranian prominent leaders did not attend.

Similarly, the Indonesia's initiative to hold a meeting between Hamas and Fatah was delayed twice time until uncertain time.⁴⁴

Second, the reality that Indonesia does not have diplomatic relations with Israel limits its effective role in peace

⁴² Dewi Fortuna Anwar, 'Foreign Policy, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia', p. 50.

⁴³ Indonesia becomes the member of OIC since its establishment in 1969. However Indonesia refused to sign the OIC charter in 1972, since Indonesia never declared itself as an Islamic country and tend to see the multilateral forum has been dominated by Arabs countries. In the early 1990's Indonesia started to reactivate its involvement in OIC. In post Soeharto era there is a necessity to participate more intensively on the OIC. Indonesia will become the host of the next OIC summit in 2014. See, Anak Agung Banyu Perwita, 'Indonesia's Changing Role in OIC: Is It a "Necessity of Foreign Policy?" *Indonesian Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2003.

⁴⁴ Donald Greenlees, 'Indonesia courts role as peacemaker in the Muslim World',

making process. Indeed, Indonesia's domestic politics tend to see the Palestinian issues as a religious problem *per se*. For Indonesian Muslim population in general, it always becomes the test case of how Indonesian foreign policy deals with religious solidarity issue among Muslim countries. Formal diplomatic engagement with the Israel government is seen to be one important step for Indonesia to make a real leverage over Israel.⁴⁵ However, there always strong domestic opposition, mainly from the radical groups to any kind of Indonesia recognition or effort to make contact with Israeli.

The ability to promote moderate Islam and democratic values also has to face with the domestic pressure that demanding a more substantive Islam foreign policy in terms of co-religious solidarity. The case of UN sanction on Iranian Nuclear Program shows this indication. Indonesia was a non-permanent member of UNSC when in 2008 to impose second resolution 1747 to give sanction on Iran for its non-compliance of nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty. Indonesia's position was support the sanction toward Iran.⁴⁶ In Indonesia, the Iran sanction became an Islamic issue. A big rally for almost three days followed by a plethora of community leaders, religious groups and politicians that accused Indonesia has betrayed a fellow Muslim state. The parliament also insisted the president to explain the Indonesia's support for the UNSC sanction. In the third resolution, Indonesia turned the vote into abstaining. The entry of Islamic voices into foreign policy has been expected to articulate a greater demand for Indonesia to

⁴⁵ Greg Barton & Collin Rubenstein, 'Indonesia and Israel: A Relationship In Waiting', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, vol. 17, no.1, 2005.

⁴⁶ The resolution to give sanction towards Iran was held three times. The first voting in 2006 resulted 14-1, with objection from Qatar. The second voting in 2008 resulted 15-0, and the voting for the third sanction resulted 14-0 and 1 abstaining from Indonesia. 'UN Votes for new sanction against Iran' <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/mar/03/iran.unitednations>, downloaded 10 May 2011. Also Bantarto Bandoro, 'Indonesia and Iran's persistent resistance', *The Jakarta Post*, 11 March 2008.

support the Islamic world. The case of Iran demonstrated that there always a dilemma in the relation between Islam and the conduct of Indonesian foreign policy, whether it should be based on co-religious solidarity to maintain domestic support or to sort out friends and enemies in fostering cooperation in serving a much bigger national interest.

Conclusion: Further Challenges

As this essay has shown, the Indonesia's new international identity is influenced by the dynamic change in domestic politics and the shifting of international environment in the post September 11. Since political Islam increasingly plays a significant role in Indonesia's democracy, it is imperative to formulate a middle way by which Islam could be incorporated into Indonesia's foreign policy. So far, the moderate Islam has become an effective instrument in the struggle to mainstreaming moderate view in domestic politics as well as improving the image of the country.

The next challenging tasks, however is to prove the claim as an alternative model of Islamic society and as a bridge between the Western countries and the Islamic world. Such challenges require not only maintaining the democratic system but also need to demonstrate the viability of Islamic values-democracy nexus in transforming its society into a tolerant, pluralist, modern and anti-violence. Moreover, the new identity project and the bigger engagement in Islamic affairs has to be conducted carefully to keep away from causing tension at home and in relations between other Islamic countries. It needs a comprehensive conceptual framework to define what kind of Islamic influence that wants to be projected in foreign policy otherwise it will turn to be a radical Islam blowback.

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