

All of Diverse Indonesia Unites Against the U.S. War Party

by Mike Billington

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, is nonetheless a highly diverse culture, with significant Christian and Buddhist minorities, multiple ethnic cultures, and a mix of secular and religious parties of all stripes. America's most fanatic war-hawk, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, was U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia from 1986-89. Parading himself as a "friend of Indonesia," Wolfowitz has held up the nation as a model of "moderate Islam," as opposed to the "extremist," "dictatorial" regimes he derides in the Middle East.

But Wolfowitz and his cohorts have been unable to woo Indonesia into support for the current American descent into Hell, as the Wolfowitz cabal have dispensed with international and moral law in pursuit of their utopian *Pax Americana*. Rather, Indonesia has united domestically, virtually without exception—Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, secular, religious, Javanese, Acehan, Balinese, etc.—in opposition to the U.S. aggression against Iraq, and the "abnormal" leadership of George Bush.

President Megawati Sukarnoputri, the first head of state to visit the United States after 9/11, and praised by Wolfowitz for her courage and leadership in the war on terrorism, has now not only deplored the lawless assault by the U.S. war machine, but told a Muslim Women's Conference: "We, the women of the world, need to remind those who claim themselves to be the world's machos, that we do not admire what they are doing. We are saddened to watch their show of strength, which is not only destructive, but also retrogressive and wrong. There are signs today that humanity is suffering setbacks because the law of the jungle is being practiced . . . where the strong feel they have a right to impose their will against the weak."

Depression and Terrorism

Indonesia was nearly destroyed, economically and politically, by the assault of the financial speculators in the 1997-98 Asian crisis—the first stage of the worldwide systemic collapse of the globalization bubble. Under the gun of both the hedge funds and International Monetary Fund, the ethnic and religious fault-lines in the nation fissured under the sudden poverty, with bloody ethnic and separatist violence in several areas, and the re-emergence of domestic terrorism against foreign and domestic authority.

President Megawati, the daughter of President Sukarno, the Father of the Republic, together with her Cabinet, worked to bring peace and development back to the nation, by maintaining good relations with the United States while simultaneously shifting the focus of the economy to internal investment and closer ties with the rest of Asia, especially China. But with the "war on terrorism" after 9/11, Southeast Asia was targetted as the "second front" after Afghanistan, with Wolfowitz and others describing the nascent domestic terrorist problem as "international terrorism." He described areas of Indonesia as "outside of government control," and thus subject to potential U.S. (or Australian) unilateral military action. When a popular foreign hangout on the resort island of Bali was bombed in October 2002, Indonesia was nearly subjected to "supranational intervention" in breach of its sovereignty. Only diligent police work, and strong government warnings in defense of sovereignty, held it off.

Emil Salim, one of the original "Berkeley Mafia" who built up the Indonesian economy under President Suharto's regime in the 1970s and 1980s, and a co-director of the prestigious U.S.-Indonesia Society, told a meeting of the Society in Washington on March 3 that the emergence of terrorism after the economic breakdown in 1998 had forced all Indonesians to ask, "What has happened to us?" But, he added, were the United States to proceed with its threat of unilateral war on Iraq, outside of the norms of international law and without UN approval, "this would force us all to ask the question: 'What has happened to humanity?'"

This is, indeed, the response from every sector of society in a nation which has repeatedly shown its love of America's true mission, since President Sukarno modeled the Constitution on that of the United States and proclaimed the famous Bandung Conference of Asian and African Nations of 1955 to be a continuation of the American Revolution of 1776. What is happening today in America, Indonesians have shouted from every venue, is un-American.

National Resistance

Following the launching of the war, upwards of 1 million people demonstrated on March 30 before the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, with speeches from the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the leading Islamic institutions, and political leaders of every persuasion—and only a few hundred police with batons

there to maintain the peace.

Syafii Ma'arif, the leader of the 35 million-strong Muhammadiyah, pronounced that "Bush needs to see a psychiatrist, because his mind-set is no longer normal. It is a pity to see a superpower country having a leader like him." Akbar Tandjung, Speaker of the Parliament and head of Golkar, the party of deposed President Suharto, threw his party's weight against the war, and delivered a letter to the U.S. representative demanding American withdrawal from Iraq. Dewi Fortuna Anwar, a top aide to then-President Habibie, and now head of the prominent Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI), said that the failure of the UN to stop U.S. aggression takes the world back to the time of "might makes right," and declared Bush clearly a terrorist. Vice President Hamzah Haz, the head of one of the leading Islamic parties, called Bush the "king of terrorists," while Speaker of the Assembly Amien Rais, the head of another Islamic party, denounced Bush as a war criminal.

Indonesia has also taken a leading role in trying to save the UN from irrelevance. Together with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and with support from Germany, France, Russia, and China, Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda called for an emergency session of the Security Council, open to all nations to debate the war, which occurred on March 27-28. Slamet Hidayat, Indonesian Ambassador to the UN, declared in his presentation: "The Security Council must, and must be seen to be seized of an issue which is in actual fact preoccupying all of us, governments and peoples alike. Its silence in calling for the immediate cessation of the aggression is deafening, indeed. . . . Ultimately, however, it is the very foundation of the UN system, its inherent principle of multilateralism, that is being tested. Unilateralism from whatever source must be held in check."

Call for UN Resolution 377

When the veto power of the United States and Britain at the Security Council undermined any action there to stem the assault on a sovereign member state, Foreign Minister Hassan insisted that UN Resolution 377, Uniting for Peace, be invoked, taking the issue to the General Assembly.

The Arab Group at the UN has formally initiated that call.

Indicating the recognition that the American unilateral, imperial policy is connected to the bankruptcy of the dollar-based global financial/economic system, Vice President Hamzah Haz proposed that the nation cease using the dollar as the currency of account for international trade, switching instead to the euro. While this will not on its own protect the nation from the impact of the global financial collapse now in progress, the unity of the nation, in league with the growing international movement to isolate the Anglo-American criminality, revives Indonesia's potential to play a leading role in ending the new imperialism, and in building a new world economic and social order.

Interview: Dr. Imad Moustapha

'They Are Trying To Link The Iraq War to Syria'

Dr. Moustapha is the Deputy Ambassador of Syria to the United States. He was interviewed by Jeffrey Steinberg on April 7.

EIR: Dr. Moustapha, could you please begin by giving some of your personal background? How long have you been in the embassy here in Washington; and other background?

Dr. Moustapha: Well, I'm really very new here. I started my job here sometime around March 3, so it's been just about one month. But then, because of the crisis, I hit the ground running, you should say.

Before that, I've never been in any diplomatic mission before. I was at the University of Damascus. I was recently Dean of Information Technology at the University of Damascus, and before that, I was lecturing, and of course, I worked extensively as a consultant with the regional organizations, on science and technology policy, and such things.

However, I have always been interested in coming, and giving public speeches about globalization, cultural identifications, and such things. I'm well known in Damascus for such things. I discuss lots of cultural issues, not purely technical and scientific.

EIR: Your official title here at the Embassy, is Plenipotentiary in Charge of Public Diplomacy, and I wonder what your early impressions are of the situation here in Washington.

Dr. Moustapha: You know, as I said, I just have come, and the crisis erupted, and I'm working really very hard trying to explain things, clarify things. You know, it's not important to know that you are true, in this country; it's important to make them perceive your vision of the truth, or version of the truth. It's really not easy.

I have been trying very hard to contact academics, to establish channels with journalists, and, most of all, I was trying also to understand—and this has involved me in almost every public event and seminar at the American Enterprise Institute—and see how these people there, how they think, how they try to recast an image of the world, according to their doctrine. Of course, I'm learning a lot. I'm very new here, and I think I need to learn a lot. And by going to the American Enterprise Institute, I am definitely learning a lot.

EIR: We refer to this, in American parlance, as the "belly of the beast." Fortunately, there are, I think, some other institu-