

# Tropes of The Crusades In Indonesian Muslim Discourse

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## KEYWORD

Crusades  
Indonesian Muslim  
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## ABSTRACT

"Crusade" is the movement of Europeans from the Middle Ages to conquer the holy land of Jerusalem from the hands of Muslims who have ruled for centuries there. This is a classic model of religious warfare. Crusaders increasingly colour the conversation of Muslims in terms of war, peace and global politics. The description of the crusade on Muslim militants and the president of the United States has led to the proliferation of crusading rhetoric even in a country like Indonesia where nota is not involved at all in the Middle East war in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This article examines the problem of using crusades and semantic relations with the word Zionism in present-day Indonesia.

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, a chain of islands spanning the equator in Southeast Asia, has the world's largest Muslim population. It also has a substantial Christian minority. Contemporary Indonesia is half a world and nearly a thousand years away from Pope Urban II's call upon Christians to retake Jerusalem from Muslim occupiers. None the less, the publication of an Indonesian translation of Carole Hillenbrand's *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (*Perang Salib: Perspektif Islam*) (2006) led to an extensive conversation about the book, the Crusades or "Wars of the Cross" as they are known in Islamic parlance, and about the relevance of these conflicts for understanding those of the modern world

This paper describes the ways in which the tropes of the Crusades have come to be used to explain and motivate what is understood as Muslim/Christian conflict by some in contemporary Indonesia. It is based primarily on ethnographic field work conducted in Indonesia between 2005 and 2007 and on the analysis of textual materials produced during this period. Nearly thirty years ago when I first traveled to Indonesia the Crusades were decidedly *not* relevant. The word *crusaid* did not exist and the Indonesian *Perang Salib* (War of the Cross) was very rarely heard or read and not at all in discussions of current events. By the time of my most recent trip to Indonesia (June 2007) it had become a salient term in Islamist discourse. This discourse has two sources: Usama bin-Laden's frequent references to "Crusaders and Jews" and US president George W. Bush's description of the "Global War on Terror" as a "Crusade." The concepts of "crusade" is now commonly used to link current and past Western conduct and to aid in the construction of an essentialist image of the West as evil, barbarous and aggressive. This discourse is linked to an ongoing discourse about *jihad*, Christians, Jews, Chinese, Usama bin-Laden, local religious figures and George W. Bush.

## DISCUSSION

### Theoretical Perspectives

In this paper will be argued that just as communities are, in Benedict Anderson's terms, "imagined" so are popular histories. In current Indonesian religious and political discourse the answer to the question "Are the Crusades still relevant?" is: "Very much indeed (Anderson, 1983). The imagination of historical continuity or what Mircea Eliade described as the mythification of history enables those Indonesians, and there are many, inclined to distrust and even to hate the West to engage in dehumanization of their opponents which in turn makes terrorism, ethnic cleansing and other acts of violence morally justifiable. Through this process, the Crusades, or more precisely images of them, have become part of an Indonesian Islamist cosmogonic myth of modernity. In *The Myth of Eternal Return or Cosmos and History*, Eliade argues that cosmogonic myth is endlessly repeated in the course of history. If this is true, it does not bode well for the future of a country in which Muslim-Christian relations are severely strained.

Two compelling theories of myth help to illuminate the power of the Crusades as a symbolic structure in contemporary Indonesia. Political Scientist Benedict Anderson and Historian of Religion Mircea Eliade are both concerned with analysis of relationships between lived experience and epistemological categories. Anderson is concerned with the origins and spread of nationalisms and national identities. He views nation states as both social realities and "imagined realities." The nation is a social reality to the extent that it exercises relatively uniform control over a bounded space and the population inhabiting it. It is an imagined community in that culturally and/or religiously salient symbols and narratives are manipulated in ways that lead an often disparate population to accept the proposition that they have a unique heritage that establishes them as a clearly defined and bounded community the borders of which are co-terminus with the geographic space of the nation state.

Eliade (2006:34) argues that in traditional societies events are meaningful only to the extent that they repeat or participate in mythological archetypes. He describes portraying social conflict in terms of cosmic conflict between heroes and demons and cyclic theories of time in which the universe moves from creation to destruction or from order to chaos as being among the strategies traditional peoples employ to explain misfortune and to ameliorate suffering - which he refers to as the terror of history (Eliade, 2006:142-151). Equally significant is his demonstration that the epistemological shift from description of events to mythic representation of them can occur with remarkable speed (Eliade, 2006:44-45).

I am cognizant of recent critiques of Eliade's work, and especially of the argument that his used of the category the "sacred" borders, at least, on theological transcendentalism." (Fitzgerald, 2000). This being said, the analysis of Indonesian Crusade discourse presented here strongly supports the position that Eliade provides powerful analytic tools, even for studies of religious phenomena that do not share his larger epistemological perspective or cultural/religious agenda.

This being said, the analysis of Indonesian Crusade discourse presented here strongly supports the position that Eliade provides powerful analytic tools, even for studies of religious phenomena that do not share his larger epistemological perspective or cultural/religious agenda (Urban, 1996). As such it motivates, as well as explains, human action. These same processes are at work in the imagination of trans-national and global communities. As Wood notes economic globalization, the growth of expatriate communities, rapid transportation and the internet have challenged the ability of nation states to maintain control of real or imagined homogenous communities with in artificially defined borders (Wood, 2001). This is equally true of the mythic narratives that sustain them. Among no people is this truer than among Islamist radicals who have increasingly come to see themselves as being caught up in a trans-national and trans-historical struggle against aggressive and demonic Christians and Jews. The lived, or witnessed via global media, experience of wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Palestine has, for many, come to be understood in terms of these archetypes of conflict.

The portrayal of social conflict in terms of cosmic struggles may suffer as antidote for the terror of history, but may at the same time promote violence, terror and suffering against those who are represented in terms of archetypes of evil. I have argued elsewhere that this process was employed by both Muslims and Christian Indonesians in the late 1990s to motivate, as well as to interpret, violence (Wood, 2001:91-100).

Tropes of the Crusades figure prominently radical Indonesian Islamist discourse and surface even in liberal circles. It can only hope that a competing myth of peace and tolerance will prove more powerful.

### The Myth of Peaceful Indonesia

In order to understand the functioning of Crusade mythology in Indonesian Islamist discourse it is also necessary to consider a competing myth. Official Indonesian discourse, Muslim liberals and many western academics have long promoted the myth that Indonesian cultures are inherently and unusually peaceful and tolerant (*ket*). This myth has deep historical roots in Anglo-Dutch Orientalism. It was developed by Lieutenant Governor Sir Stamford Raffles in an attempted to justify the British occupation (1811-16) of the Netherlands Indies during the Napoleonic Wars (Woodward, 1996). Addressing an audience including the directors of the East India Company that would decide the fate of British rule in the newly acquired territories he observed that: “javans by no means feel hatred to Europeans as infidels.” (Raffles, 1817). This myth was to survive British and Dutch colonialism to assume a central position in Indonesian nationalist ideology/mythology. Religious and political leaders are fond of saying that Islam came to Indonesia peacefully and that traders and mystics instead sultans and *mujahadin* established Islam as the religion of Java. This was one of the most basic myths of the New Order regime of Indonesia’s second president Suharto (ruled 1965-98). Many Indonesians believe, or at least wish to believe, it to be true. Hasyim Muzadi is the general chairman of *Nahdlatul Ulama* (Ulama). Hasyim Muzadi is the general chairman of *Nahdlatul Ulama*.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on his election as President of the World Conference of Religion for Peace in September of 2006 he explained that he had been chosen because:

They see Indonesian Muslims as moderate unlike Muslims in the Middle East where wars make it difficult for people to be moderate and make it harder for them to compromise (Jakarta Post, 2006).

### Contextualizing the Myth of Peaceful Indonesia

This understanding of the peacefulness of Indonesian Islam is not entirely correct. Javanese chronicles, which are the cosmogonic myths of Indonesian Islam, speak of both conversions by wandering Sufis and of wars in which Majapahit, the last Hindu kingdom in Java, was destroyed. Sunan Kudus, one of the semi-legendary *wali sanga* (nine saints) of Java, is said to have commanded the Muslim forces (Eaton, 1978). The New Order came to power in 1965 in the wake of an abortive coup, after which hundreds of thousands of supporters of the Communist party, the alleged perpetrators of the coupe, were slaughtered. This was simultaneously political and religious violence particularly in east Java. There the perpetrators were primarily observant Muslims and most of the victims were practitioners of a local Islam which retains elements of Indic and indigenous traditions. It is ironic that a government that came to power in a sea of blood spoke so often and so fervently of the inherently peaceful nature of its people. Much of the killing was done by *Ansor*, the youth wing of Muzadi’s *Nhadlatul Ulama*. It was orchestrated by one of the organization’s senior leaders, some of them Muzadi’s relatives, who in later years often spoke of peace, tolerance and harmony.

It is true that during much of the New Order period violence was contained and Islamic discourse was usually cast in what Bernard Lewis terms the quietest mode (Lewis, 1988). There have been *shari’ah* centric reformist and even fundamentalist currents in Indonesian Islam for almost a century. They have, however, until recently, focused on *dakwah* (propagation of the faith) and providing social, educational and medical services rather than political activism. For nearly two decades it appeared that the wave of militancy that engulfed the Muslim World following the Iranian Revolution of 1979 had spared Indonesia. Many of us who have devoted our careers to the study of Indonesian Islam, and many liberal Indonesian Muslims, were somewhat smug in our conviction that “It (Islamist violence) can’t happen here.” The “Bali Bombings” of October 12, 2002 showed that we were wrong (Reuter, 2003).

In retrospect it is clear the militant Islamist organizations were not active in Indonesia for the same reasons they are not in Syria and Libya. Strong states with effective security organizations and the willingness to employ brutal repressive measures are capable of containing the activities of militant movements.

Several factors contributed to the end of this period of relative tranquility after the fall of Suharto in 1998. Thousands of Indonesians fought against the Russians in the Afghan war. They learned *jihadist* Islam as well as the use of explosives and the techniques of asymmetrical warfare. The virtual collapse of the Indonesian economy in 1997 prompted waves of protest and the formation of many opposition movements, some secular, some comprised of moderate Muslims and others Islamists. The globalization of knowledge provided fresh

intellectual resources to those inclined towards militant positions. Newly found freedom of expression made it possible for militant groups to enter the public sphere.

These factors, combined with the US, British and Australian occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq and the continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands gave birth to a radical discourse in which tropes of the Crusades holds a prominent place. None of the Indonesians I have spoken with in recent years support foreign occupation of Muslim territory. Even the most moderate believe that control of oil resources is the actual motivation for the Iraq war. In the same interview in which he described the peaceful nature of Indonesian Islam Hasyim Muzadi stated:

All religious followers have to be vigilant about efforts to use religion for non-religious purposes. For example, in the war in Iraq [U.S. President George W. Bush] made a "Crusade" the theme while the actual motive was the control of oil. Fortunately, both Muslims and Christians know this very well. It should never happen that people use religion in a war for oil.

In the context of Indonesian and broader Muslim discourse Muzadi's description of the Iraq war as a "war for oil" must be considered moderate. Indonesian radicals think of it as a war against Islam and to kill Muslims. Many of these Indonesians believe that  *jihad*  is the appropriate and indeed religiously obligatory ( *wajib* ) response. It is worthy of note that Muzadi denounces one illegitimate source of conflict (religion) but has no doubt that the war is illegitimate because it is being waged to gain control of essential natural resources. He and almost all other Indonesians find the US neo-conservative view that the war was launched to build a democratic Middle East to be entirely implausible. In another sense Muzadi's statement is difficult to interpret. He would seem to suggest that President Bush used the concept of Crusade to justify a war of aggression motivated by economic concerns. This would suggest that in his view the US public would support a war based on religion but not one based on economics and that it is US and not Indonesian discourse about the war that is dominated by tropes of the Crusades.

#### **Radical Islamist Discourse in Today's Indonesia**

Many of the elements of Indonesian Islamist discourse are almost identical to that current in the wider Muslim World. This is the consequence of the globalization of knowledge in the last quarter century. In the 1970s Indonesian discourse was primarily local. While there were those who called for an enhanced role for Islam in public life this call was rarely linked to global concerns. The following factors led to the globalization of Indonesian discourse. Significant increases in the number of Indonesian students studying in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Many of those studying in Saudi Arabia have adopted Wahabi understandings of Islam. The fact that the Saudi government provides financial support for those who found or teach at Islamic educational institutions when they return has enabled them to spread Wahabi teachings. Students in Egypt have returned with ideologies almost similar to those of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Justice and Prosperity Party, which received nearly 8% of the vote in the 2004 elections and 42% in the Jakarta provincial elections of 2007, is understood best as an Indonesian branch of the Brotherhood.

Print and electronic publications have expanded exponentially. What is particularly important is that the number of works translated for Arabic and Farsi has increased dramatically. Indonesian editions of the works of Islamist thinkers including Sayid Qutb, Hasan al-Bana, Usama bin-Laden and the Ayatollah Khomeini circulate widely. So do those of Hizb al Tahrir al-Islami, an off shoot of the Muslim brotherhood that advocates the establishment of a global Caliphate. The proliferation of electronic media has also led to much greater awareness of world affairs. There are numerous Indonesian Islamist web-sites and Indonesian language web sites in Iran and the Arab Middle East (<http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252>). It is significant that Iranian texts available to Indonesians are nonsectarian. They do not promote an explicitly Shia'h agenda, though they do contain links to sites focused on the "Tragedy of Karbala". They depict Iran as defending the interests of Muslims everywhere and describe Iran and Indonesia as partners in this effort. They are also very anti-Semitic. While relatively few Indonesians own computers, a substantial number have access to internet cafes, particularly in major cities and in university towns.

All of these factors have contributed to the development of a consistent world view now shared by many Indonesians. It links local concerns with global Islamist discourse It is especially common among urban youth. Two of the most basic elements of this world view are an extreme understanding of the Islamic injunction to

“command the good and forbid the evil” and the proposition that the west is entirely evil. These are coupled with extreme anti-Semitism.

***Commanding the good and forbidding the evil.***

This is the most basic principle of Islamic law (Qur’an, 3:110 ). Like bin Laden and other Islamist radicals most Indonesian activists are not *ulama* (traditional Islamic scholars). Most have only superficial religious educations and a black and white view of the world. They do not rely on the centuries of legal and interpretive scholarship revered by other conservative Muslims. They rely instead on highly selective and literal readings of the Qur’an. The Qur’an includes passages in which Muslims are encouraged to defend themselves against tyranny and oppression (Qur’an, 2:191). It also includes passages encouraging forgiveness and reconciliation that radicals choose to ignore (Qur’an, 40:43). Similarly while most Muslims interpret “forbidding the evil” to mean eliminating vices such as gambling, drinking and prostitution, groups including the Front for the Defense of Islam (*Front Pembela Islam*) have staged what are called “sweepings” damaging or destroying bars and nightclubs, particularly those frequented by foreigners. They have threatened to take tourists and others hostage. The most radical, including the “Bali Bombers,” advocate destroying the lives and property of those who, in their opinion, do evil. The fact that the Kuta Beach area of Bali, where the bombings took place is filled with bars, discos, drug dealers and bordellos points to the conclusion that the truck bombings are simply an extreme form of sweeping.

***The West is entirely evil.***

Like bin Laden and other *ihadists* Indonesian radicals believe that there is an international conspiracy Christian Crusaders and Zionist Jews dedicated to the destruction of Islam. The Gulf War, the occupation of Iraq, the West Bank and Gaza strip are cited as examples as are the inclusion of Iran and Iraq in the “axis of evil.” The recent Lebanon War and threats against Iran’s nuclear program are understood as just another part of this global conspiracy. The popular *Islamist* magazine *Sabili* describes the “invasion” of the Islamic World, liberalism, ridicule of the Prophet Muhammad (a reference to the Danish cartoon crisis) conversion to Christianity and pornography as efforts to destroy the morality of the Muslim community by colonialist Crusader forces, against whom it is necessary to conduct *ihad* (Sabili, 2006:60-61). The strongest statement of this position is posted on the *al Qaeda Indonesia* Web Site. It reads:

Say to the unbelievers and the Crusaders that we are terrorists because terrorism is a religious obligation mentioned in the Book of God (the *Qur’an*). The worlds of the east and the west must know that we are terrorists and extremists.

***Anti-Semitism in Indonesian Islamist Discourse***

Denunciations of Jews and Zionists, who are said to dominate the world economy and dictate US foreign policy, are often coupled with demands for an end to paper money and the issuing of gold and/or silver dinars. There are perhaps thirty Jews in Indonesia. When I first visited the country no one thought or wrote much about Jews. Today anti-Semitism is rampant. Copies of Indonesian translations of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* circulate widely. Many Indonesians accept this scandalous forgery an accurate account of the world economic order. *Sabili* went so far as to claim the recent World Cup Football Tournament was controlled by Zionists. One of the most virulent examples is a book concerning the “end of time” the title of which translates: “*The Anti-Christ Sinks His Claws into Indonesia.*” (al-Adnai, 2007).

It outlines a complex conspiracy headed by the Anti-Christ, who it describes as a Jew, including, among other organizations, Theosophy, the Lion’s and Rotary Clubs, Sufi orders and Shi’ah Muslims. There are persistent rumors that leading liberal Muslim figures, including former President Abdurrahman Wahid, are actually Jews. The fact that the daughter of the late liberal Muslim scholar Nurcholish Madjid married a young Jewish man while studying in the United States is often mentioned as “proof” that liberal Muslims are actually Jews.

Claims such as these are made throughout the world. There are, however, some uniquely Indonesian elements of this discourse. Of these the most common are the inclusion of Australia and Indonesian Chinese in the conspiracy of Crusaders and Jews. Islamists have long regarded Australia as a threat to Indonesian sovereignty. During the East Timor crisis there were repeated rumors that Australia was using questions concerning human rights abuses by the Indonesian military as a pretext for invading Java .

Australian Prime Minister John Howard is often linked to President Bush by referring to him as the Deputy Sheriff charged with subduing Indonesian and other Southeast Asian Muslims. President Bush is frequently referred to as a cowboy as well as the Sheriff.

Chinese are often described as being similar to Jews. Many Indonesian Chinese are in fact Christians and do control much of the nation's economy from large conglomerates to local wholesale and retail markets. They are also criticized for eating pork and raising pigs, which Muslims consider to be *haram* (forbidden). There are frequent rumors, some published in magazines such as *Sabili*, that some combination of Christians, Jews and Chinese has secretly added pork to popular food products. A recent issue of *Sabili* featured photographs of Chinese pig farmers which was clearly an effort to link two categories of beings despised by radical Indonesian Islamists

Many of the claims Islamists make about the murder and decapitation Iraqi and Somali children, the putative roles of US and Israeli intelligence services in the destruction of the World Trade Center, etc. are, from the perspectives of western audiences, absurd fabrications. It would be easy to dismiss them as paranoid. This would be a serious mistake for at least two reasons. The first is they accuse western nations of carrying out acts that would clearly violate basic principles of Islamic law and to which *jihād* is the appropriate response. Many Muslims do not trust the western media or the pronouncements of western officials. Even some moderate Muslims are inclined to accept these rumors as at least plausible if not certainly true. This has potentially serious implications. Tambiah has shown the rumors play an important role in sparking the outbreak of ethnic and religious violence in South Asia (Tambiah, 1996). It is plausible to suggest that the dissemination of Crusader-Zionist conspiracy theories has contributed to the animosity between the western and Muslim worlds and to the deterioration of Muslim - Christian relations in Indonesia and that Crusade rhetoric has furthered this divide.

#### **The Crusades Indonesian Islamist Historiography**

The Crusades themselves did not play a significant role in the course of Indonesian history. When they occurred the global civilizations of Southeast Asia were of South Asian Hindu and Buddhist origin. The tropes and literary representations of the Crusades have, however, become relevant for the emergence of radical Islamist discourse about history. They link the past and the present depicting the totality of Muslim history as a struggle with non-Muslim injustice. Colonialism provides a critical link between historical and contemporary Crusaders. A recent Indonesian history of the city of Kudus states that Sunan Kudus, one of the *wali songo* (nine saints), who founded the city fought not only the Hindu kingdom of Majapahit but the Portuguese conquerors of Malacca as well (Shiddiq, 2000:43-44). It begins with a conversation between the saint and military commander Sunan Kudus and Sultan Patah of the early Muslim kingdom of Demak.

“What is it Commander?” asked Sultan Patah. “Here is a guest from Malacca” replied Sunan Kudus as he presented the visitor. “The letter he brings explains the Malacca has been seized by the Portuguese.” “Apparently the colonizers intend to come here. This cannot be tolerated. We must take action” replied the Sultan.

The text next explains that:

In the year 1453 Portugal was occupied by the Turks who established an Islamic government. Because of this the Portuguese hated Islam with a passion. They did not distinguish between ethnicity and Islam or between Islam and ethnicity.

Keep in mind the fact that at that time Indonesia was known as a fertile and prosperous Muslim land that the Portuguese wanted to attack. Killing the Muslim saints was the means through which they intended to expand their influence in Indonesia. In 1511 they succeeded in occupying Malacca. All of the inhabitants fled to Sumatra, Sulawesi or Java.

Sultan Patah ordered his Commander Ja'far Shodiq to assemble a fleet of tens of vessels. They were ordered to sail from Jepara to the sound of *takbir* (calling on God). The fleet arrived at Malacca on January first 1513. Ja'far Shodiq initiated a naval battle. But at that time the Dutch came to the aid of the Portuguese with troops and modern weapons. Because of this the Demak fleet was easily defeated and was forced to retreat. Ja'far Shodiq had no choice other than to order his fleet to disengage.

Only a small number of ships survived the journey home. Most of the fleet was sunk by the Portuguese naval forces. Most of those who had struggled died as martyrs and heroes.

Despite the fact that it describes events that took place nearly five centuries ago and that it includes serious historical errors, the tone of this text is remarkably contemporary and resonates strongly with depictions of the Crusades and with contemporary world events. In all three cases Christians launch a war of aggression to seize the lands and wealth of innocent Muslims. Western military alliances and superior technology make it impossible for the Muslims to defeat the colonialists and large numbers die as martyrs or become refugees. Changing the names and dates would make this a radical Muslim version of the story of the modern Middle East – An alliance of Crusaders and Jews use modern weapons to seize Muslim lands and resources and large numbers die as martyrs or become refugees.

### **The Crusades and Contemporary World Politics in Indonesian Islamist Discourse**

Fauzzan al-Anshori *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (Indonesian Jihadist Council) identifies four distinct Crusader eras. His view is that the first began in 1189 with King Richard I's of England invasion of "Palestine." The Second Crusade is said to have begun in 1914 when, he claims, Christian countries began working together with Kemal Ataturk to destroy the Caliphate. The Suez Crisis of 1956 is mentioned as the Third Crusade in which the French, British and Jews worked together to conquer Egypt. The fourth Crusade is said to have begun in 2001 when forces under the command of George W. Bush invaded Afghanistan and then Iraq and probably will invade Syria and Iran in order to destroy the power of Islam. Professed Muslims who provide any sort of assistance to the United States are described as unbelievers (*kafir*), polytheists (*mushirk*) and apostates (*mutard*). Believers are exhorted to "Live gloriously or die as martyrs." ([http://majelis.mujahidin.or.id/new/kolom/hadist\\_shahih/](http://majelis.mujahidin.or.id/new/kolom/hadist_shahih/)).

US President George W. Bush's visit to Indonesia in November of 2006 sparked large protest demonstrations and a fresh wave of Crusader discourse. Al-Muhajirun of the Islamist organization *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jam'ah* (The People of the Tradition and the Community) described President Bush and the "Supreme Commander of the War of the Cross" and the "Pharaoh of the current century." Pharaoh is how the Islamists who carried out the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat described him. He quotes Bush's statement "This is a Crusade" in English as well as Indonesian. He describes the president as the leader of a nation of unbelievers (*Negara Kufur*) who believes that he is God. He describes the leaders of Muslim countries as apostates (*murtad*) and called on Muslims to support *jihad* where ever it is carried out. Habib Rizieq of *Front Pembela Islam* (The Front for the Defense of Islam) another radical group stated: "It is religiously permissible (*halal*) for anyone who has the opportunity to kill Bush. It is not only permissible; there is a religious obligation (*wajib*) to kill Bush. I accept the responsibility in this world and the hereafter."

While this type of rhetoric can be expected from groups like ASJ and FPI, both of which have been linked to violent extremists, spokesmen for normally moderate Islamic organization were only slightly less vitriolic. Maman Abdurrahman of *Persatuan Islam* (The Unity of Islam) described Bush, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Urban as "*Lan'atullah*", Arabic for "the accursed of God." This is very nearly the most derogatory statement that can be made in Indonesian. He describes Benedict as being as evil as Urban. He describes a centuries long struggle to impose Christianity of Muslim lands. Afghanistan and Iraq are described as the latest in a series of victims of "wars of the cross, holy wars and crusades" dating to the time of the Spanish Empire. Maman concluded his remarks by calling on God to bring peace to the Muslim community and "destroy our enemies." ([http://www.persis.or.id/site/index.php?option=com\\_content](http://www.persis.or.id/site/index.php?option=com_content)).

The leaders of the country's two largest Muslim organizations refused to meet with President Bush and issued a joint statement stating that a meeting would be useless because "The United States has broken its promise of halting aggression against several Muslim countries." (Nu & Muhammadiyah, 2006). Hayim Muzadi repeated his claim that the US government is using religion as an excuse for a war for oil and explained that "If I went there [the meeting] I would be justifying US aggression.

## CONCLUSSION

In one account of his address calling upon Christians to take up the Crusader's banner Pope Urban II is alleged to have describe the behavior of Muslims in the Holy City of Jerusalem as follows:

..... a race from the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion (Munro, 1895).

Urban promised to forgive the sins of all who went into battle against Muslims and urged them to enter the fray with cries of "It is the will of God" on their lips. His words, or rather inchoate tropes of them continue to haunt the collective memories of Christians and Muslims. They are embedded in intersecting semantic fields or lenses through which Christians and Muslims view unfolding realities.

With few exceptions Christian and secular western people have abandoned Urban's understanding of "Crusade" and have come to see it as a righteous struggle against natural and man made calamities. Religious usage of the term is restricted descriptions of evangelical outreach. Muslims continue to understand the term Crusade in some approximation of its original usage, a supposedly "holy" war of aggression.

Muslim discourse about crusades includes a combination of historical and mythic narrative, symbol and rumor that presents Muslims as innocent victims and their local and global and local opponents as inhumane, aggressor against whom  *Jihad*  is clearly called for. Even in countries such as Indonesia far removed in space as well as in time from the battles of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, any attack by Christian and other western forces on Muslim lands can be understood in this archetype. There is a marked tendency for Indonesians to see what President Bush defines as a "Global War on Terrorism" as a "Global Crusade against Islam." President Bush's of the term in reference to the war on terror rendered these claims all the more plausible and led increasing numbers of Muslims to imagine realities in terms of these semantic structures. Given the world view of Indonesian radical Islamists it confirmed that the archetype was indeed being repeated.

This suggests that the relationship between relationships between events and their mythic interpretation is dialectical. The closer the correspondence between observed or experienced events and an archetype, the more likely it is that people will construct coherent historical/mythological narrative equating current and historical events.

What hope there is for countering Indonesian Islamist world views lies in the fact that, as Eliade shows, the mythification of history can be a rapid process. There is yet hope that the competing archetype of peaceful Islam will emerge as the dominant one and that the story of relationships between the three Abrahamic faiths can be re-imagined in ways that promote not terrorism and military adventurism, but inter-cultural and inter-religious tolerance. The analysis presented in this paper also indicates that the processes through which trans-national imagined communities develop do not differ greatly from those involved in the imagination of nationalisms. It also suggest that the processes of demonization of others so apparent in localized ethno/religious conflicts are the same as those used in the imagination of global wars between ethno/religious/political communities imagined at more inclusive levels. At the same time this is unlikely unless observed events correspond with the archetype of peace. The final, and perhaps most important, conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that in the contemporary world scholars and others concerned with policy matters can benefit greatly from employing religious studies methodologies in the analysis of political discourse, particularly in environments where religion and politics are tightly intertwined.



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