# The Political Role of The Icmi After The 1999 General Election:
## *From Political Vehicle to An 'Umbrella' Organization*

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| KEYWORD | ABSTRACT |
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| *ICMI*<br>*Islamic Parties*<br>*Islam* | *After the fall of the New Order, ICMI as an organization of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals established in the New Order era, which was originally close to the government party (Golkar), scattered to look for a more appropriate political channel. Diverse ideologies and backgrounds resulted in ICMI members establishing and joining different political parties. Although, there are still a number of other ICMI members remaining loyal to the Golkar party. However, the results of the 1999 elections disappointed a number of ICMI members who had joined in a number of these parties. The disappointment implies the birth of the "Central Axis" which is driven by Amien Rais. Therefore, it is true to say that ICMI in the New Order was very important because being a political vehicle turned into an 'association' organization which incidentally after the 1999 election encouraged the birth of the Central Axis.* |

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## INTRODUCTION

### The ICMI and the Fragmentation of the Islamic Parties

Shortly after replacing Soeharto, Habibie was challenged by Indonesian political elites to carry out the general election. Habibie agreed with this demand and promised to held the general election as soon as possible. Under his government, the General Election Act (UU) 2/1985 was replaced by a new Act, namely Act (UU) 3/1999. Based on this new Act, Habibie could carry out the General Election on June 7[th,] 1999, not in 2003 (Pratiknya, 1999).

This general election was considered as the first and the most democratic general election since the general election held in 1955. Indonesian people were allowed to choose freely without intimidations and manipulations. It is different from the six general elections held by the New Order government in 1971, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997, which was identified by some scholars as undemocratic election.

According to Dwight Y. King, the LIPI (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia* or Indonesian Institute of Sciences) identified three distortions regarding the general election held by the New Order government. The first was that the government's involvement was very dominant. It can be seen from the structure of the general election committee. The second was that the general election was conducted in favor of the government's party, the Golkar. Government bureaucracy as the Golkar's supporters involved either in mobilizing people or

manipulating the election. The third was that other political parties such as the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or United Development Party) and the PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia or Indonesian Democratic Party) were not allowed to propose any ideas which differed from the government's policy (King, 2003).

Before the general election in 1999, there was an effort from some Muslim intellectuals to unite Muslim organizations. On May 12th, 1998, they succeeded in forming an organization named BKUI (Badan Koordinasi Umat Islam or Islamic Society Coordinator Assembly). Coordinated by Anwar Harjono, a modernist Muslim, there were eleven Islamic organizations which joined the BKUI including the ICMI. Initially, this organization was not aimed to establish a political party. Therefore, when some of the BKUI members proposed the BKUI to be the Islamic party, the ICMI disagreed with this opinion. Ahmad Tirtosudiro, one of the ICMI's chairmans, said that "If the BKUI became a political party, the ICMI would be the first organization which resigned from the BKUI" (Abidin, 2000).

This disagreement indicated that there was a difficulty in establishing the single Islamic party. This is because the BKUI (Badan Koordinasi Umat Islam or Islamic Community Coordinator Assembly) members came from diverse social and educational backgrounds resulting differences in their political orientations. Muslim intellectuals such as Anwar Harjono and Amir Luthfi, for instance, wanted to establish a political party which was based on Islam. However, other Muslim intellectuals preferred Pancasila rather than Islam as the basis of their political party (Abidin, 2000).

As a result, there were many political parties established by Muslim intellectuals creating a fragmentation in Islamic parties. This fragmentation became more complex when during the campaign there were many riots among the Islamic parties' supporters. In Jepara, East Java, for instance, there was disturbance between the PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa or National Awakening Party) and the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or United Development Party) supporters resulting four people died. In fact, they came from the same social organization, namely the NU or Nahdlatul Ulama known as the traditionalist Muslim organization (Suryakusuma, 1999; Abidin, 2000). Among the Muhammadiyah members, there was also a conflict since they had become members of two different Islamic parties, that is the PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional or National Mandate Party) and the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or United Development Party) (Abidin, 2000).

Furthermore, the Islamic parties did not receive the majority votes.  During the general election in 1955, Islamic parties received about 44 % of the votes, in the general election of 1999, however, they only gained about 38%  of the votes.

Tabel. 1.

| Islamic Parties In 1955 | Votes | Seats | Islamic Parties In 1999 | Votes | Seats |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Masyumi* Party | 20,92% | 57 | PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* or National Awakening Party) | 12,60% | 51 |
| *Nahdlatul 'Ulama* Party | 18,41% | 15 | PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* or United Development Party) | 10,70% | 58 |
| PSSI (*Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia* or Indonesian Islamic League Party) | 2,89% | 8 | PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional* or National Mandate Party) | 7,11% | 34 |
| Perti (*Pergerakan Tarbiyah Islamiyah* or Movement of Islamic Education) | 1,28% | 4 | PBB (*Partai Bulan Bintang* or Crescent Star Party) | 1,94% | 13 |
| PPTI (*Partai Persatuan Tharikat Islamiyah* or Islamic Sufism United Party ) | 0,22% | 1 | PK (*Partai Keadilan* or Justice Party) | 1,36% | 7 |
| AKUI (*Aksi Kesatuan Umat Islam* or Islamic Community United Action) | 0,21% | 1 | PNU (*Partai Nahdlatul Ulama* or Nahdlatul 'Ulama Party) | 0,64% | 5 |
| | | | PP (*Partai Persatuan* or United Party) | 0,56% | 1 |
| | | | PPIIM (*Partai Politik Islam Indonesia Masyumi* or Masyumi Indonesian Islam Political Party) | 0,43% | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | PSII (*Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia* or Indonesian Islamic League Party) | 0,36% | 1 |
| | | | PKU (*Partai Kebangkitan Umat* or Community Awakening Party) | 0,28% | 1 |
| | | | KAMI (*Partai Kebangkitan Muslim Indonesia* or Indonesian Muslims Awakening Party) | 0,27% | - |
| | | | PUI (*Partai Umat Islam* or Islamic Community Party) | 0,25% | - |
| | | | PAY (*Partai Abul Yatama* or the Poor's Father Party) | 0,20% | - |
| | | | PIB (*Partai Indonesia Baru* or New Indonesian Party) | 0,18% | - |
| | | | SUNI (*Partai Solidaritas Uni Islam Indonesia* or Indonesian Islamic Solidarity Union Party) | 0,17% | - |
| | | | PCD (*Partai Cinta Damai* or Peaceful and Love Party) | 0,16% | - |
| | | | PSII 1905 (*Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia* 1905 or Indonesian Islamic League of 1905 Party) | 0,14% | - |
| | | | *Partai Masyumi Baru* or New Masyumi Party | 0,14% | - |
| | | | PID (*Partai Islam Demokrat* or Islamic Democratic Party) | 0,06% | |
| | | | PUMI (*Partai Umat Muslimin Indonesia* or Indonesian Muslim Community Party) | 0,05% | |
| Total | 43,93% | 86 | | 37,60% | 172 |

(King, 2003)

From the above table, it can be seen that the performance of the Islamic parties in 1999 was poorer than that in 1955. There are some reasons behind this result. The first reason is that, compared to the general election in 1955, the general election in 1999 was participated by more Islamic parties. Whereas, in 1955, there were only four Islamic parties, in 1999, there were more than ten Islamic parties. It means that in the 1999 general election, the Islamic parties became more disperse. This is because four Islamic parties in 1955 dissolved into some political parties. The Masyumi party, for instance, became three Islamic parties, namely PMB (Partai Masyumi Baru or New Masyumi Party), PPIM (Partai Politik Islam Masyumi or Islamic Masyumi Political Party), and PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang or Crescent Star Party). PSII (Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia or Indonesia Islamic League Party ) was broken into two new Islamic parties. On other hand, PPTI (Partai Persatuan Thariqat Islamiyah or United Islamic Sufism Party ) split into three new Islamic parties. However, they were not allowed to participate in the general election in 1999. It is similar with PPTI, Perti (Pergerakan Tarbiyah Islamiyah or Movement of Islamic Education) also was broken into four Islamic parties. But, these new Islamic parties did not pass the selection and verification to participate in the general election in 1999 (Salim, 1999).

Furthermore, in the 1955 general election, Masyumi party was considered as the only party representing modernist Muslim voters. However, in the general election in 1999, there were more than four Islamic parties representing modernist Muslims. They were the PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional or National Mandate Party), PK (Partai Keadilan or Justice Party), PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang or Crescent Star Party), Partai Masyumi Baru (New Masyumi Party), PPIIM (Partai Politik Islam Indonesia Masyumi or Indonesian Islamic Masyumi Party) and PUI (Partai Umat Islam or Islamic Community Party).

Like modernist Muslims, in 1999, traditionalist Muslim also did not have a single Islamic party. The traditionalist Muslims are affiliated with Nahdlatul 'Ulama or the NU. In 1955, the NU could establish the single political party, namely the PNU (Partai Nahdlatul Ulama or Nahdlatul 'Ulama Party). However, facing the general election in 1999, there were four Islamic parties from the NU or the traditionlist Muslim group. They were PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa or National Awakening Party), PKU (Partai Kebangkitan Umat or

Society Awakening Party), PNU (Partai Nahdlatul Ulama or Nahdlatul Ulama Party), and SUNI (Partai Solidaritas Uni Indonesia or Indonesian Solidarity Union  Party) (Jamhari, 2002).

The second reason why the performance of Islamic parties in the 1999 general election was poor is that Muslim voters did not consider Islamic parties as the only channel for their political aspiration. Since many Muslim intellectuals have spread to non-Islamic parties such as the Golkar, Muslim voters could not be provoked easily to choose Islamic parties. The ICMI members, for instance, have had a strong connection with the Golkar since the New Order regime. After the fall of the New Order, some of them remained to be the members of the Golkar party. Therefore, some Muslim voters have still channeled their political aspiration through Golkar party.

Because of this poor performance of Islamic parties, some Muslim intellectuals thought that it was crucial to unite these Islamic parties in the parliament. The ICMI became the first organization which proposed this issue. In its national congress in Bandung, the ICMI called the 'elite' Muslims to consolidate their political power. Furthermore, the ICMI promoted the formation of the Islamic group in the parliament (Suharsono, 1999).

Supporting the above ICMI statement, Dawam Rahardjo stated that there are three roles of the ICMI which should be chosen after the fall of Soeharto. The first role is the ICMI as an opposition power to the government. The second role is that the  ICMI plays as a partner organization with the government. And the third role is that the ICMI becomes an intermediary institution. Dawam Rahardjo proposed that the ICMI should choose the third role. This is because the task of the ICMI is to motivate Muslim group to participate in the modernization and the country development by reducing the rebellious mentality of Muslim group (*Republika*, 1999).

In this case, there was a correlation between the statement of the ICMI and Dawam Rahradjo's opinion. The ICMI was suggested to play its role as an intermediary organization by supporting the coalition of Islamic parties in order to improve the Muslim group participation in the political arena. The coalition among these parties was crucial because many ICMI members had became the chairman of the  political parties. According to Hisanaro Kato, they attend every Wednesday in the ICMI's  meeting (Kato, 2002).

It means that almost all of the Islamic parties were led by the ICMI members. Therefore, in this sense, I propose that the position of the ICMI among the Islamic parties can be seen in the diagram below:
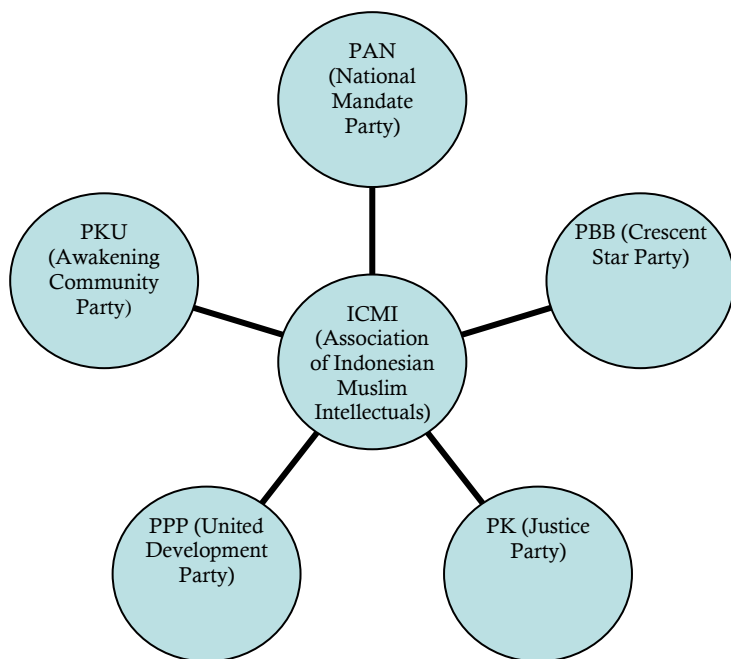


From the above diagram, the role of  the ICMI as an 'umbrella' organization as Yudi Latif's opinion is very apparent. This is because these five Islamic parties were led by ICMI members. They were Amien Rais

(PAN), Nur Mahmudi Ismail (PK), Hamzah Haz (PPP), Yusril Ihza Mahendra (PBB), and KH.Yusuf Hasyim (PKU). Although they established or joined new political parties, in fact, they have remained as the ICMI members.

## The ICMI and The Poros Tengah

Although the PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan or the Struggle Indonesian Democratic Party) won the general election, it did not get the majority votes. While PDI-P received 33,1 % of the votes, Golkar party as the second winner only gained 26 % of the votes. Therefore, in order to get the majority votes in the parliament, each political party needed a coalition. The majority vote was needed in order to win the presidential election in the parliament.

Some leaders from Islamic parties, then, prepared to establish an Islamic group in the parliament. This group was aimed to defeat the PDI-P as a 'secular' or nationalist party. The Islamic parties had considered the PDI-P as their common enemy since many PDI-P members in the parliament came from non-Muslim group. Even, before the general election was held, Muslim organizations such as the MUI issued a *tausiyah* (advice) inviting Muslim voters not to choose the political parties proposing non-Muslim candidates to be the members of the parliament. This *tausiyah* was easily assumed by many as implicitly to prevent Muslim voters to choose the PDI-P.

As it had been stated during its campaign, the PDI-P proposed Megawati Soekarno Putri as the presidential candidate. Because Magawati is a woman, some Muslim leaders provoked a debate whether woman could be Indonesian president or not. Habibie's supporters proposed some statements saying a woman was prohibited to be a leader based on religious consideration. In this sense, the ICMI, as Habibie's supporter, also avoided Megawati to be Indonesian president (Dijk, 2001.

Even, one of the ICMI members from the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan or United Development Party), A.M. Saefuddin, stated that Megawati was not Muslim since she prayed in Hindu's temple. Saefuddin also provoked by asking whether Indonesian people ready to be led by Hindu President. For Habibie's supporters, choosing Habibie as president means defending Islam (Hasan, 2002). Besides in the PPP, there were some ICMI members supporting Habibie from the Golkar party, PBB, and PDR (Partai Daulat Rakyat or People's Sovereignty Party).

However, some ICMI members from PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional or National Mandate Party) and PK (Partai Keadilan or Justice Party) which joined in the reformation faction considered that Habibie was not capable enough to carry out the reformation issues. At the same time, they also did not support Megawati to be the president. Amien Rais, the spokes man of this group, came up with the reason why he refused to nominate Megawati was that there were many members of Megawati's faction in the parliament, the PDI-P's faction, coming from non-Muslim background (*Tempo*, 1999).

Initially, one of ICMI members from the PK, Nur Mahmudi Ismail, nominated Amien Rais to be the next president. Responding to this nomination, Amien Rais refused to accept this proposal since his political party, the PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional or National Mandate Party), only received 7, 3% of the votes in the 1999 general election. Amien Rais, in fact asserted to nominate Abdur Rahman Wahid or Gus Dur to be the next president on the basis of Abdur Rahman's Party, the PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa or National Awakening Party, gained more votes than that of the PAN (Najib, 2000).

As a result, there were two groups in the ICMI members regarding the president's nomination. The first group was the ICMI members who proposed Habibie as their presidential candidate. Generally, this group came from the ICMI members in the Golkar party and the PBB. The second group was the ICMI members who nominated Abdur Rahman Wahid to be the next president. This group was led by Amien Rais.

However, among these two groups, the Amien Rais group became very dominant. This is because, based on rational consideration, Habibie's nomination would create a fragmentation in Islamic parties. For some Islamic parties, such as the PAN and the PK, Habibie still had a political problem since he had had a close connection with Soeharto during the New Order regime. As a result, if Islamic group in the parliament nominated Habibie, it would lose its voters, particularly, from the PAN and the PK. It meant that the nationalist camp would succeed in nominating Megawati to be the next president.

Therefore, the task of the ICMI members was to create a solid coalition in the parliament in order to defeat the nationalist group. This task was very significant because some of the ICMI members were not only sitting in the Islamic parties. There were some ICMI members who joined with non-Islamic parties. Consequently, putting 'Islam' to name this group was then considered not proper. It is fortunate that, one of the ICMI members, Bambang Sudibyo, proposed *Poros Tengah* (Middle Axis) for the name of this Islamic political group (*Kompas*, 2000; Najib, 2000).

The *Poros Tengah* group became very popular name for Islamic political group when, on July 24th, 1999, it officially was announced by four ICMI members who became the chairman of four different Islamic parties. They were Hamzah Haz (PPP), KH.Yusuf Hasyim (PKU), Amien Rais (PAN), and Yusril Ihza Mahendra (PBB). These four prominent figures of the ICMI agreed to consolidate their members in the parliament to win the *Poros Tengah* group (*Bernas*, 1999; *Gatra*, 1999).

As a result, the *Poros Tengah*'s name enlarged the Islamic political group in the parliament. Because ICMI members also joined the non-Islamic parties, the ICMI also recommended this group to collaborate with Muslim intellectuals in the non-Islamic political parties, such as the PDR led by Adi Sasono and the Golkar party led by Akbar Tanjung (Latif, 2005). By adding PDR and Golkar members, the *Poros Tengah* became greater than the diagram I proposed before. It can be seen from the diagram below.
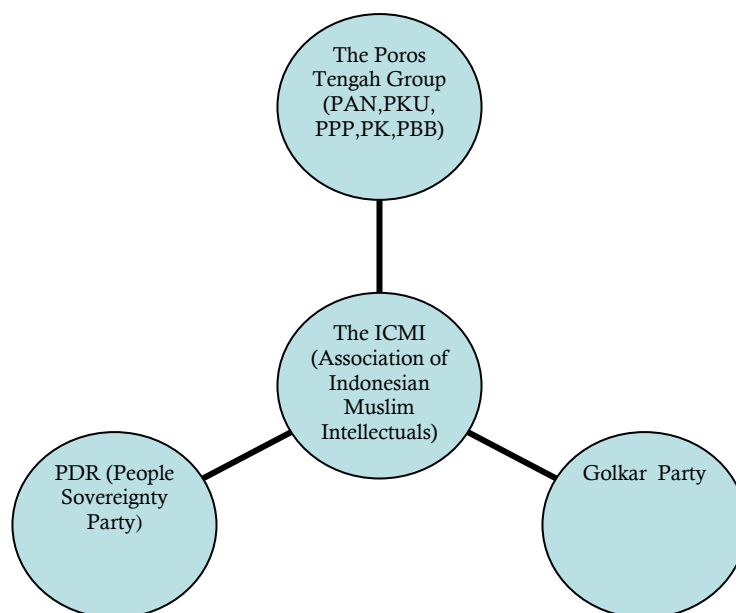


Achmad Tirtosudiro as the acting or the executive General Chairman of the ICMI then organized a meeting among Muslim intellectuals who joined the Islamic parties and the Golkar party in his house. This meeting was attended by Amien Rais (PAN), Yusril Ihza Mahendra (PBB), Nurmahmudi Ismail (PK), Zarkasih Nur (PPP), Eky Syahruddin, and Marwah Daud Ibrahim (Golkar) (Latif, 2005). This meeting was very crucial for the ICMI as an 'umbrella' organization to consolidate its members in the political parties. This is because the ICMI members did not have same opinion regarding the presidential candidate. As it was stated before, the ICMI members in the Golkar party, PRD and PBB preferred nominating Habibie to Abdur Rahman Wahid.

However, the intensive meeting between the ICMI members who joined in the *Poros Tengah* group resulting a clear decision that the *Poros Tengah* would nominate Abdur Rahman Wahid as the only candidate for the next president. On September 24th, 1999, for instance, there was a meeting attended by Akbar Tanjung (Golkar Party), Abdur Rahman Wahid (PKB), Yusril Ihza Mahendra (PBB), Nur Mahmudi Ismail (PK), Tosari Wijaya (PPP), and Amien Rais (PAN) (*Forum Keadilamn*, 1999). This meeting was followed by the request from

some Muslim politicians in the *Poros Tengah* to Habibie stating that Habibie should cancel his nomination as the candidate for the next president. (*Kompas,* 1999).

In fact, Abdur Rahman Wahid was very suspicious to this nomination. During the New Order, Abdur Rahman Wahid and the ICMI members had not had a good relationship. Since the establishment of ICMI, Abdur Rahman Wahid have been very critical to the ICMI. In this crucial time, KH. Yusuf Hasyim, as one of the ICMI members, played an important role in lobbying Abdur Rahman Wahid to receive the *Poros Tengah's* nomination. Because of his lobbying, Abdur Rahman Wahid finally received his nomination as the candidate for the next president from the *Poros Tengah* group (Najib, 2000).

In the *Poros Tengah* group, the support for the nomination of Abdur Rahman Wahid became stronger when Habibie did not want to nominate himself to be next president (*Kompas*.1999; Abidin, 2000). This is because his progress report during the MPR's session was rejected by the majority of MPR's members (*Forum Keadilan,* 1999). In essence, after Habibie's progress report had been rejected by the majority of the members in the People's Advisory Assembly (MPR), Habibie invited some ICMI members in the *Poros Tengah* group in his house. In this meeting, Habibie decided to quit his nomination. He and other ICMI members, then, decided to nominate Amien Rais. However, Amien Rais rejected this nomination. Amien Rais remained to propose Abdur Rahman Wahid as the presidential candidate (Mietzner, 2000).

Amien Rais' refusal had provoked ICMI members in the Golkar Party who previously had nominated Habibie to be the next president to shift their political attitude by supporting Abdur Rahman Wahid's nomination (*Kompas,* 1999). However, the ICMI members in PBB responded Amien Rais' refusal by nominating Yusril Ihza Mahendra. This nomination can be assumed as "an anticipation of possible withdrawal of Wahid" (Mietzner, 2000).

After Habibie had decided to quit the race in the presidential election, Abdur Rahman Wahid's nomination created the large coalition among the ICMI members in the *Poros Tengah* group, traditionalist Muslims in the PKB faction, and other factions such as Utusan Golongan (Organizational Delegates) and Utusan Daerah (Provincial Delegates) in the MPR (the People's Advisory Assembly).

Finally, after Yusril Ihza Mahendra had withdrawn his nomination in the last minute of the election opened, this coalition succeeded in making Abdur Rahman Wahid to be the fourth Indonesian president, after he won 373 of the votes defeating Megawati who only received 313 of the votes (Mietzner, 2000). In this sense, I propose that Abdur Rahman Wahid's winning can be drawn as follows:
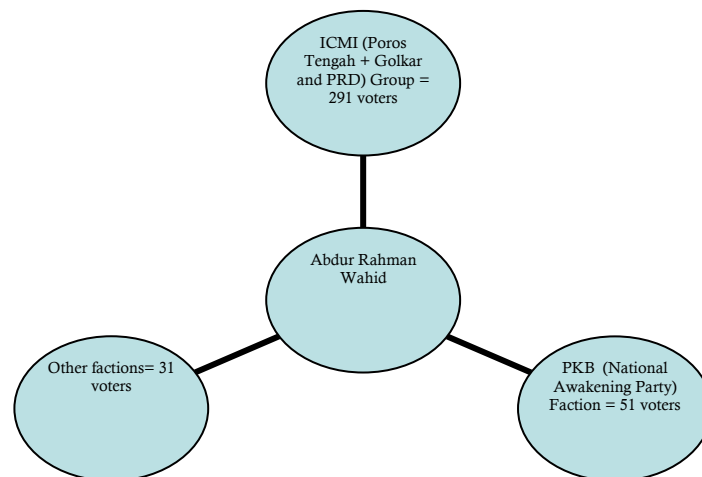


In essence, the success of the *Poros Tengah* group in nominating Abdur Rahman Wahid as the fourth Indonesian president could not be separated from its political success that it had gained before. The *Poros Tengah* group had won, at least, two important positions over the nationalist or the PDI-P faction. The first position was the chairman of MPR (the People's Advisory Assembly). In this position, the *Poros Tengah* group

had succesfully nominated Amien Rais to be the chairman of MPR (the People's Adivisory Assembly). The second position was the chairman of DPR (House of Representatives). Akbar Tanjung, as the candidate of the *Poros Tengah* group, had been succeeded to become the chairman of DPR (House of Representatives).

In this sense, the role of Muslim intellectuals who joined the ICMI was different from the role of Muslim intellectuals who in 1950s could not surpass the political role of the nationalists group such as Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta. Furthermore, this indicated that the politics of the ICMI was a high politics since its role as 'golden bridge' which links various elements of the Muslim society, particularly its contribution to the formation of the *Poros Tengah* group (Gaffar, 1999).

By using political parties as their political vehicle, the political characteristic of the ICMI members have been apparent. Moreover, their various political orientations and ambitions caused their different participation in the political parties. However, their different political parties then have been united by the ICMI. In this sense, the democratic process forced the ICMI to be an umbrella organization.

From the *Poros Tengah* political case, we may indicate that in reality, between the modernist Muslims and the traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia could be united. However, this relation was only a temporary since in the next section, it will be seen that the ICMI, modernist Muslim, and traditionalist Muslim under Abdur Rahman Wahid's presidency have a political conflict resulting the fall of Abdur Rahman Wahid's presidency.

### Abdurrahman Wahid versus the ICMI and the Nationalists

The election of Abdur Rahman Wahid to be the fourth Indonesian president had an important implication for the NU. This election was the ultimate political achievement for this traditionalist Muslim organization. As it is known, more than thirty years during the New Order government, the NU had been in the margin of the state. However, this ultimate political achievement of the NU could not be separated from its coalition with the ICMI. This Islamic coalition, according to Andrèe Feilard, was a historical phenomenon. This is because the traditionalist Muslim group and the modernist Muslim group had some differences that divided Indonesian Islam since the beginning of the twentieth century (Fielard, 2002).

Therefore, on the same day of his election as the Indonesian president, Abdur Rahman Wahid came to Habibie's house. In this case, Abdur Rahman Wahid wanted to show his gratefulness to Habibie for the ICMI's support to his nomination both in the Golkar party and the Islamic parties (Uchrowi and Usman, 2000). Furthermore, Abdur Rahman Wahid invited Amien Rais as the representation of the Poros Tengah group in making his cabinet. It is not strange that in Abdur Rahman Wahid's cabinet, there were many ICMI members chosen as his ministers. There are Bambang Sudibyo, Hamzah Haz, Hasballah M Saad, Yahya Muhaimin, Tolchah Hasan, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Jusuf Kalla, Alwi Shihab, Juwono Sudarsono, Wiranto, and Basri Hasanuddin (Latif, 2005).

However, Abdur Rahman Wahid could not keep his good relationship with the ICMI members. Under Abdur Wahid's regime, the ICMI members were forced to move their office from the BPPT (government office). The ICMI members, then, prepared the ICMI office in the country-side of Jakarta. It was different from the old office whose government office while the new ICMI office is private office. Zaim Uchrawi and Usman Ks described that it indicated that ICMI moved from the power circle to the society (Uchrowi and Usman, 200).

Moreover, some of Abdur Rahman Wahid's policies were criticized because these policies had insulted the Islamic groups. One of these policies was Abdur Rahman Wahid's willingness to establish commercial links with Israel. Furthermore, he was regarded by Islamic groups as the person defending the Christians on the religious conflict in Moluccas (Feilard, 2002). As a result, the Poros Tengah group wanted to consider its support to Abdur Rahman Wahid's presidency. It is not strange that, in January 2000, the Poros Tengah group admitted that it was a great mistake to bring Abdur Rahman Wahid to the power (*Tempo*, 2000). In March 2000, Abdur Rahman Wahid proposed to the MPR " to revoke a 1966 decree banning communist ideology" (Feilard, 2002). This proposal raised more criticism from the Poros Tengah group. Amien Rais, for instance, said that Wahid could be asked to explain this proposal more deeply in the parliament.

However, among Abdur Rahman Wahid's policies, his decision to sack some ICMI members from his cabinet became the starting point troubling his presidency. Some ICMI members kicked out by Abdur Rahman were Hamzah Haz (Minister of Welfare), Nurmahmudi Ismail (Minister of Forestry), Yusril Ihza

Mahendra (Minister of Justice), Wiranto (Minister of Politics and National Security), Jusuf Kalla (Minister of Trade), Hasbalah M Saad (Minister of Human Rights), Bambang Sudibyo (Minister of Monetary), and Juwono Sudarsono (Minister of Defence) (Ahmad, 2011).

Thereupon, the ICMI members who joined in the Poros Tengah group consolidated their political power to dismiss Abdur Rahman Wahid from his presidency. At the annual session of the MPR (the People's Advisory Assembly) in August 2000, Reform faction as the part of the Poros Tengah group spoke in front of the MPR's members that Abdur Rahman Wahid failed to be Indonesian president. Even, the speech accused Abdur Rahman Wahid of the worst hypocrisy (Barton, 2002). In November 2000, Amien Rais, as the chairman of the MPR, asked Indonesians' forgiveness since he led Indonesian people to choose the wrong president. He also stated that Abdur Rahman Wahid should resign from his post as Indonesian president (*Gatra*, 2000). He added that he could be chosen as the vice president to accompany Megawati (*Surya*, 2000).

This Amien Rais' manoeuvres provoked demonstrations from the NU members who supported Wahid's presidency. They intensified the demonstration after the first memorandum was issued by the parliament in February 2001. This memorandum was supported by the majority members of the parliament. All fractions in the parliament except the PKB faction voted against Wahid. There were 394 members against Wahid's presidency (Feilard, 2002).

The first memorandum issued by the parliament indicated that the ICMI members united in the Poros Tengah group was no longer backed up Abdur Rahman Wahid's presidency. Since the nationalist camp strongly wanted to bring Megawati to the power, this memorandum became very crucial for the nationalist group to join with the Poros Tengah group in order to dismiss Wahid's presidency.

Supported by his political party, PKB, Abdur Rahman Wahid, still wanted to defend his presidency. After the first memorandum had been issued by the parliament, Wahid's supporters warned to his opponents such as "Gus Dur retreats, East Java secedes" (Feilard, 2002). As it is known, the majority of Wahid's supporters were living in East Java. It is not strange that, in this region, there were some group of trained men to defend Wahid's presidency (Feilard, 2002).

However, the political alliance between the Poros Tengah group, the Golkar faction, and the nationalist PDI-P faction in the parliament became stronger. Started by the meeting between two ICMI members, Hamzah Haz (The Poros Tengah group) and Akbar Tanjung (Golkar faction) in July 2000 (*Sabili*, 2000), they continued approaching PDI-P faction. These three political groups were the biggest groups in the parliament. They had same political treatment from Abdur Rahman Wahid since their members in his cabinet were sacked by Abdur Rahman Wahid (Ja'far, 2000).

Megawati's husband, Taufiq Kiemas, played an important role in making the alliance between the PDI-P and the ICMI members who joined in the Poros Tengah and the Golkar party (Siagian, 2004). This indicated that there was a new political paradigm among Muslim intellectuals. The nationalist PDI-P and Islamic parties group were no longer in political opposition. They had the same political interest forcing Abdur Rahman Wahid to leave his presidency. Megawati was no longer avoided by the Poros Tengah group. Even, this group nominated her to replace Wahid.

As a result, after the second memorandum had been issued in May 2001, the extraordinary session was held in July 2001. This extraordinary session had one important mission, namely to impeach Abdur Rahman Wahid. Finally, on July 23rd, 2001, the alliance among the Poros Tengah, the Golkar, and PDI-P succeeded in dismissing Abdur Rahman Wahid and bringing Megawati as president (Feilard, 2002). Furthermore, Hamzah Haz as the candidate of the vice president from the Poros Tengah group won the election defeating Akbar Tanjung and Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Kamaludin, 2004). Hamzah Haz's winning can not be separated from the fact that there was alliance between the nationalist PDI-P and the Poros Tengah group in the parliament.

Although Hamzah Haz has become the NU's members, he also has joined the ICMI. It means that after the fall of Habibie as president, the ICMI succeded in bringing another ICMI member to be the vice president. In Megawati's cabinet, some of the ICMI members were also appointed. Some of them were Malik Fadjar, Jusuf Kalla, and Yusril Ihza Mahendra.

From the above explanation, it can be seen that the political freedom resulting the emergence of various political parties decreased the role of the ICMI in Indonesian politics as the political vehicle for Muslim

intellectuals. This is because the political channel was opened and Indonesia has become a democratic country. Because of this political freedom, Muslim intellectuals then have used political parties as their political vehicle. As a result, the role of the ICMI has become an umbrella organization.

After the result of the 1999 general election was announced, the role of the ICMI as an umbrella organization was challenged in Indonesian politics. This is because the performance of Islamic parties was poorer than that in the 1955 general election. This poor performance of the Islamic parties could not be separated from the fact that there was a fragmentation in the Islamic parties. Some leading figures of the ICMI in the Islamic parties, such as Amien Rais, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Hamzah Haz, and Nur Mahmudi Ismail, agreed to form Islamic political group in the parliament, namely the Poros Tengah group.

Since the ICMI members also have  joined to 'secular' parties such as the Golkar party, the Poros Tengah group became greater. This political group proved its ultimate political power by bringing Abdur Rahman Wahid as president and defeating Megawati, the presidential candidate from the nationalist PDI-P.

However, if one refers to the political shift of the Poros Tengah by challenging Abdur Rahman Wahid's presidency resulting the fall of his presidency in July 2001, it can be assumed that there was significant change in understanding political Islam. For Muslim intellectuals who joined the Poros Tengah group, political Islam was regarded as the struggle to win the Muslim group interest. In this sense, political Islam has become more fluid. They did not consider that nationalist group was their enemy as long as this group could benefit the Muslim group interest.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS
### *The ICMI after Muktamar IV*

In December 2005, the ICMI held its Muktamar IV in Makassar. This Muktamar resulted an important phenomenon in the ICMI, that is the change of  ICMI leadership from one person  to the collective leadership. This collective leadership was called a presidium of five.

With this new system, a presidium of five will lead the organization for the next five years. Jakarta Post (2005) wrote in its news:

> House of Representatives lawmaker Marwah Daud Ibrahim, Minister of Transportation Hatta Radjasa, former ICMI chairman Muslimin Nasution, Bandung-based Gunungjati State Islamic University rector Nanat Fatta Natsir and Jakarta-based Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Rector Azyumardi Azra will take turns in coordinating the unprecedented collective leadership of the association. Marwah, the first woman ever to lead the Muslim organization, expressed her guarded optimism that the new style of leadership would help ICMI respond to internal and national challenges, particularly human resources development.

This new leadership is aimed to avoid the political role of the General Chairman of the ICMI such as under Habibie's leadership. It means that the ICMI was hoped to struggle in non-political level. Marwah Daud Ibrahim said that the ICMI will focus on improving the quality of human resources or Sumber Daya Manusia (SDM) through education. Also, she added that the ICMI will concern on regeneration and eradicating poverty through the empowerment of the people's economy (*Jakarta Post,* 2005). However, from the above composition of the new leadership, one can see that there are two Indonesian politicians to be the presidium, namely Marwah Daud Ibrahim and Hatta Radjasa.  Does it mean that the ICMI is still interested in Indonesian politics?

Furthermore, shortly after this Muktamar had been ended, there was the establishment of the ICMI Muda or Young Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association. This establishment was given positive response from Habibie, the former of the ICMI's General Chairman. Habibie argued that the establishment of the ICMI Muda is part of regeneration program in the ICMI. However, among the ICMI boards, Marwah Daud Ibrahim for instance, rejected this establishment.

These two phenomena indicated that it is very difficult for the ICMI to distance its role from Indonesian politics. However, to predict the future of the ICMI in Indonesian politics is not an easy task. In this case, there are two different opinions regarding the future of the ICMI in Indonesian politics. The first group is those who propose that the ICMI will still play an important role in Indonesian politics. This optimistic idea is

proposed by some scholars such as Hisanaro Kato (2002) and Yudi Latif. These scholars said that the ICMI will play its role as an 'umbrela' organization for Muslim intellectuals (Kato, 2002).

The second group is those who feel pessimistic to the future of the ICMI in Indonesian politics. This group is represented by Abdur Rahman Wahid and some scholars in the NU. This group believe that the ICMI politically collapsed after the fall of Soeharto. As a result, the ICMI is not a significant organization (Kato, 2002). The NU scholars such as Masduki Baidlawi,  NU deputy secretary-general, said that the role of the ICMI in Indonesian politics after the fall of Soeharto ended. He said that the ICMI" collapsed as the regime collapsed. And now, with the country entering the so-called democracy era, people have other options. If the ICMI wants to make a return, I don't think it will win grass-root support." He added that the organization or association which wants to sell Islam as a "political commodity" would no longer be effective in gaining support from the grassroots. He also said that the ICMI had once grown fast because of the undemocratic situation under Soeharto's regime (*Jakarta Post,* 2003).

The role of the ICMI in Indonesian politics will be crucial as moderate Muslim organization in promoting democratic values. The ICMI also will be an important organization in promoting Islam as a peaceful religion. In this sense, the ICMI and the movement of radical Muslim organizations such as the FPI (Front Pembela Islam or Islamic Defender's Front) and MMI (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia or Council of Indonesian Muslims) have a different political orientation. The majority of the ICMI members prefer democratic process to radical movement. It is not strange that most of the ICMI members, then, have joined political parties.

Because the ICMI is an organization for educated people, the ICMI could not maintain many members such as the NU and the Muhammadiyah. The ICMI will remain for minority Indonesian people. Therefore, the ICMI members will face difficulty if they want to compete in the direct presidential election, for instance. It is not strange that some prominent figures of the ICMI, such as Amien Rais and Hamzah Haz, could not get significant votes in the direct presidential election in 2004.

Although the ICMI does not have many members compared to the NU and the Muhammadiyah's members, but its members have higher political and educational skill. As a result, the ICMI members still get some important positions in Indonesian politics. Nowadays, the ICMI members are still appointed to be government ministers. It can be seen from Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono's cabinet. They are some ICMI members such as Bambang Sudibyo, Muhammad Nuh, and Hatta Radjasa. Moreover, other ICMI members are appointed in important positions. Some of them are Jimly Asshidique, the Chairman of MK (Mahkamah Konstitusi or Constitution Court), and Baqir Manan, the Chairman of  MA ( Mahkamah Agung or Supreme Court).

Furthermore, in order to win some positions such as the Chairman of MPR (The People's Advisory Assembly), DPD ( The Senate) and DPR (House of Representatives), the ICMI members in political parties still has its political power. It can be seen from the fact that after the general election in 2004, three important positions in the MPR, DPD, and DPR have been given to the ICMI members. They are  Hidayat Nur Wahid (the Chairman of MPR), Ginanjar Kartasasmita (the Chairman of DPD) and Agung Laksono (the Chairman of DPR). However, their winning in getting such positions is based on their individual skills. The ICMI members have been appointed or chosen in some important positions in Indonesian politics because they have intellectual and political skill, not because of the ICMI.

Therefore, in the future, the attention will not be focused on the ICMI as an organization, but it will be focused on the ICMI members. There are at least three figures in the ICMI who will influence the political atmosphere in Indonesian politics. They are Azyumardi Azra, Hatta Radjasa, and Hidayat Nurwahid. Azra will be considered as important scholar for Indonesian politician since he has become an important informant for Indonesian newspaper in responding the current situation of Indonesian politics. Azra, presumably, will get a position in the next cabinet after the 2009 general election. Hatta Radjasa has been known as the minister of the State Secretary. If Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono will be reelected as Indonesian president, he remains in the center of the power. And Hidayat Nur Wahid can be predicted as the brightest politician in the ICMI. His political party, PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera or Welfare Justice Party),  has been considered as the most promising Islamic party for the 2009 general election. If his political party will receive 20% of the votes in the next general election, this Muslim intellectual will be nominated as the presidential candidate.

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