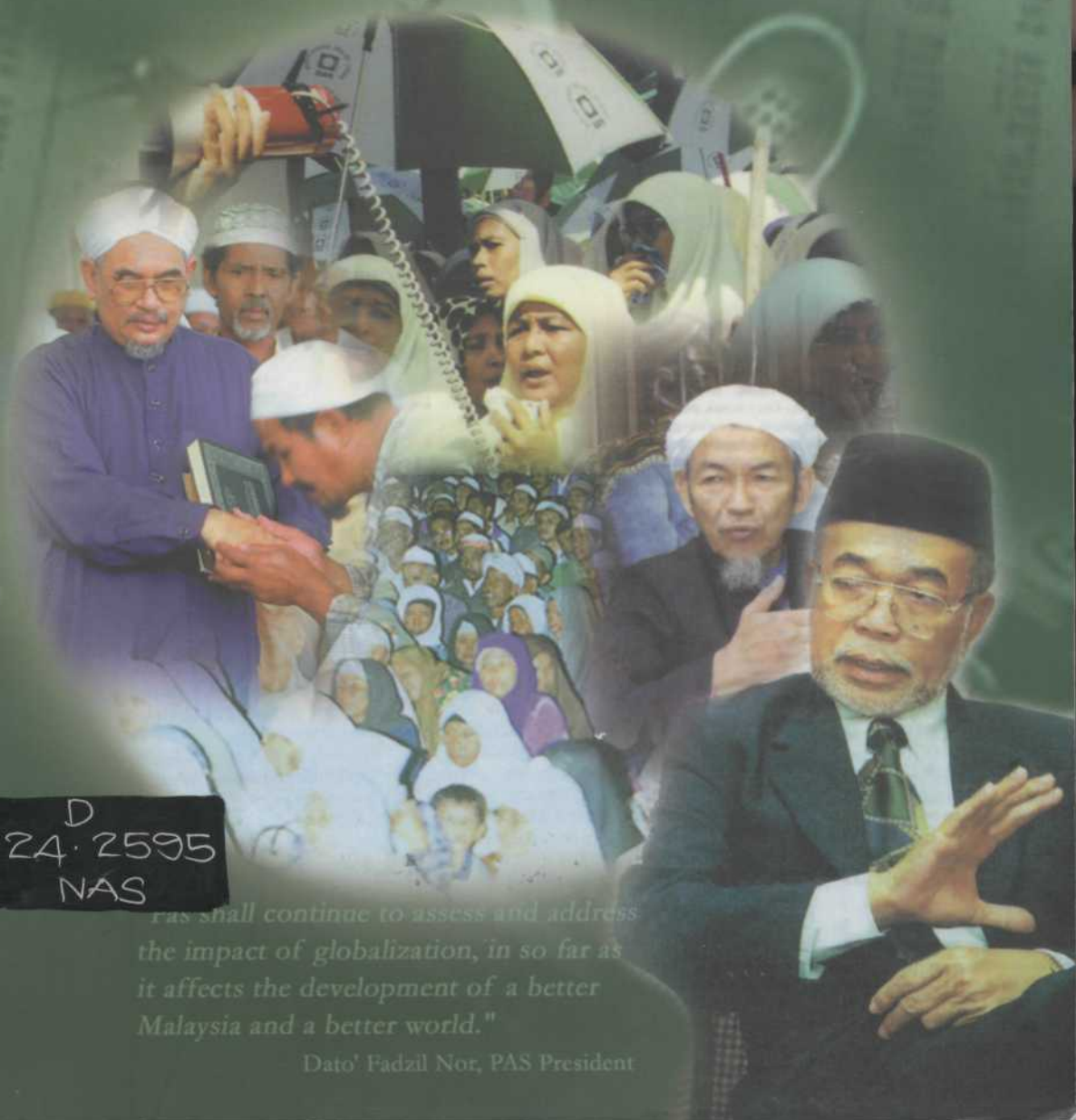


# The Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) Ideology, Policy, Struggle and Vision Towards The New Millennium

by  
Nasharudin Mat Isa  
Secretary-General  
Islamic Party of Malaysia



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NAS

... shall continue to assess and address the impact of globalization, in so far as it affects the development of a better Malaysia and a better world."

Dato' Fadzil Nor, PAS President

THE ISLAMIC PARTY OF  
MALAYSIA (PAS)



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Towards The New Millennium

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PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA



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## PROLOGUE

The Holy *Qur'an* said and Allah SWT has promised that:

*“O you who believe! If any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him – lowly with the believers, mighty against the rejecters, fighting in the Way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault. That is the Grace of Allah, which He will bestow on whom He pleases. And Allah encompasses all, and he knows all things. Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers – those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship). As to those who turn (for friendship) to Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers – it is the fellowship of Allah (Hizbu’Llah) that must certainly triumph.”*

*(Surah al-Ma'idah: 54-56)*

# ***INTRODUCTION***

In this First International Conference of Asian Political Parties in Manila, the Philippines, allow us to take this opportunity to draw the attention of distinguished and honourable guests from various Governments of the Asian region representing numerous political parties re the above discourse entitled, "The Islamic Party of Malaysia: Ideology, Policy, Struggle and Vision Towards the New Millennium."<sup>1</sup> It is indeed a great honour and is my great pleasure to share glimpses of our political ideas so as to "build bridges and foster a culture of partnership among Asian political parties."

In this paper we intend to expose in brief, Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) views vis-à-vis the Malaysian political system so as to share our experience and compare notes among colleagues of other nations towards achieving a common goal and understanding. It is no doubt that the coming millennium poses a greater challenge for us, Asians, just as we are already facing the heats of living in a borderless world of E-Commerce. Can Asian politics of today pose a new challenge to the region for the West in the new millennium? Why not perhaps? "In Europe's Dark Ages", wrote Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, "Asian civilization was quite advanced, and industrialized, too....In many respects, the wave of civilization spread to the West from wellsprings in the East."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A paper presented by Nasharudin bin Mat Isa, a Member of the Malaysian Parliament and also *Secretary General, Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS)* during the "First International Conference of Asian Political Parties" organized by the Christian Democrat and People's Parties International (CDI) in cooperation with the Asian Center for the Study of Democracy, in Manila, the Philippines, 17-20 September 2000.

<sup>2</sup>Mahathir Mohamad and Shintaro Ishihara, *The Voice of Asia*, Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1995, p.71.

## ***The Emergence of PAS – A Brief Historical Background***

The Islamic Party of Malaysia or popularly known as *Parti Islam SeMalaysia* (PAS) is an Islamic Political Party<sup>3</sup> based on the Holy *Qur'an* and *Hadith* of The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and is like any other modern political party in the true meaning of the term. PAS participated in all the past Malaysian General Elections since 1955 and to date, managed to form its own Government (Opposition) in the States of Kelantan (1990) and Terengganu (1999). Pas has now 27 (out of 193) Members of Parliament and 98 (out of 394) State Assembly Members at the Federal and State level based on the last Malaysian General Election contested on 29 November 1999.



*PAS mass rally in a football stadium*

<sup>3</sup>A brief account of the principles of modern Islamic Party could be found in the writings of a very prominent and world-known 'ulama' - Sayyid Abu A'la al-Maududi. Please see for example, his *Political Theory of Islam* (ed. and trans. by Prof. Khurshid Ahmad), Lahore, 1967 and *First Principles of an Islamic State* (ed. and trans. by Prof. Khurshid Ahmad) Lahore, 1968.



Falling back to history, PAS was formed by groups of *Malay 'ulamas* (religious learned scholars of Islam) on 24 November 1951 as *Persatuan Islam SeMalaya* (PAS) or Pan-Malaya Islamic Party (PMIP) which was later changed to *Parti Islam SeMalaysia* (PAS) in 1972. Empirical study<sup>4</sup> has showed that PAS's emergence and growth is unique in the sense that it stemmed out from the '*ulama*' group of the secularly nationalist Malay dominated Party, UMNO (United Malays National Organization)<sup>5</sup>, based on **principal religious (Islam) differences** between the late Ustaz Ahmad Fu'ad Hassan, then was the Chairman of The Advisory Committee of UMNO Religious Affairs, and the top leaders of UMNO. It is crystal clear that Ustaz Ahmad Fu'ad Hassans' views plus the other '*ulamas* still in UMNO, contradicted strongly with those from the Malay nationalistic leaders such as Datok Onn Jaafar<sup>6</sup>, C.M. Yusuf and Tunku Abdul Rahman al-Haj.<sup>7</sup>



The author with  
Alternative Front Leaders

<sup>4</sup>See for example, J. Funston, "The Origins of Parti Islam SeMalaysia," in *Journal of South East Asian Studies*, Vol. VII, I, 1976.

<sup>5</sup>UMNO was formed on 11 May 1946 by Datok Onn Jaafar, father of the late Tun Hussein Onn, the third Prime Minister of Malaysia, as a secularly based nationalist party congregating the Malays. It now stands as the largest political party in Malaysia. Since that first General Election in 1955, UMNO together with other main political parties like the MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association), the MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress) and others, amalgamate into a single mainstream front known as *Barisan Nasional* (Nasional Front) against the Opposition. For an understanding of the historical background please also see for example, Mohammad Yunus Hamidi, *Sejarah Pergerakan Politik Melayu Semenanjung*, Kuala Lumpur 1961 and Roff. W.R., *The Origin of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur, Heinemann, 1967.

<sup>6</sup>He became the first UMNO President but later left UMNO and on 28 February 1954 formed *Parti Negara* (State Party) UMNO due to his strong nationalistic and uncompromising ideas against present leaders at that time such as Tunku Abdul Rahman himself, Datok Abdul Razak Hussein and others.

<sup>7</sup>Tunku became the second UMNO President after Dato' Onn Jaafar. He was also the first Malaysian Prime Minister.

Ever since its formation to date, PAS had always maintained its Islamic ideals in all of its political, economical and social domains, just as it had earlier clearly stated from the very beginning that:-

“PAS will fight for the implementation of its aspirations, according to the political condition, as its members wanted....PAS does not take account of group or race, leftism or rightism, Shafi'i or Hanafi, but by fighting for its aspirations, it is solely as a real Islamic union demanded by Allah SWT. PAS does not distinguish the classes of human life to be based on language, nation, racial origin and even on religion.... The independence of the Malay land will actually release the people from the foreign rule and slavery. It is a genuine independence based on democracy. PAS is certain that only with a government founded by the people, from the people and for the people (sic) that democracy will fully be realized.... The Islamic *Ummah* in Malaya will live together with other ummah by uniting themselves in a real Islamic union.”<sup>8</sup>

As for the different viewpoints expressed by the *'ulamas* sitting in UMNO Religious Affairs Committee that first brought about the formation of PAS against the higher echelon of the UMNO central leaderships, Ustaz Haji Ahmad Fuad, PAS's first President, has this to say:-

“The service according to the individual way usually does not fulfil the requirements for the development of religion and native land. The *'ulama'* union or the Islamic Party of Malaya aims at realizing this alliance to enable us to work for the development of religion, native land and all Muslim brothers. Because of this I appeal to, and hope that, the *'ulama'* and all Muslim brothers will unite in this organization”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>*Utasan Melayu*, 11 October 1952.

<sup>9</sup>*Sunday Times*, 25 November 1951.



In his position also as an UMNO Central Executive Committee during that time, in an attempt to highlight the significant role that could be played by the '*ulama*' to the people, he had also said that:

"The '*Ulama*' are not united and their followers are splitting into groups simply because of trivial matters.....Indeed the beauty of the Islamic religion cannot be shown without an '*Ulama*' Union. The strength of Islam cannot be realized without the union. Indeed the '*Ulama*' Union will be a means of achieving good aspiration."<sup>10</sup>

Which was widely circulated in the official news letter of UMNO, *Suara UMNO*, under the caption: "The '*Ulama*' of Malaya are not yet United and Have no Organization". This was the very first idea towards the formation of PAS. Late November 1951, PAS was formed and finally officially separated from UMNO. The '*ulamas* stood on their own and on 15 June 1955, PAS registered itself as a single legitimate political party. PAS won its first and only Parliamentary seat during the first Federal Election held on 27 July 1955.

Nevertheless, PAS did join the ruling party in 1972 as a component together with UMNO in a political coalition to rule Kelantan, the northern state of Malaysia, but later decided to go on its own again until now. During the 1999 Election, PAS together with three other political parties,<sup>11</sup> united under the Opposition strength known as *Barisan Alternatif [BA]* (ie. Alternative Front) and staged the strongest challenge ever broadcasted against the government coalition. *BA* managed to secure 42 (out of 193 or 21.8%) Parliamentary Seats and 113 (out of 394 or 28.7%) of the State Assembly Seats. That was the biggest election ever won by PAS on its own since 1955!

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<sup>10</sup>*Suara UMNO*, 15 April 1951.

<sup>11</sup>Namely Democratic Action Party (DAP), *Parti Keadilan Nasional* (Keadilan) and *Parti Rakyat Malaysia* (PRM).

## IDEOLOGY

It is imperative to stress a point that PAS became separated from UMNO basically because of **its difference in ideology** – PAS based on the whole teachings of Islam as envisaged in the *Qur'an, Hadith, Ijma' of the 'Ulama'* and *Qiyas*<sup>12</sup> where else UMNO is based purely on rationalism, pragmatism and nationalism, although both parties are supported mostly by the Muslim Malays of Malaysia. To prove PAS's genuine Islamic struggle and does not accept racism,<sup>13</sup> PAS *Mursyidul 'Am* ("General Spiritual Guide") and also the Chief Minister of Kelantan for the past eleven years, *Tuan Guru*<sup>14</sup> Dato' Nik Abdul Aziz bin Nik Mat, once had said and being repeated numerous times by many PAS leaders ever since, that "*PAS is willing to accept a non-Malay leader as the Prime Minister provided that he is a Muslim by faith.*"<sup>15</sup> But this brave political notion was never ever brought up in the open by UMNO although it has always championed that "UMNO is the only Malay political party that really understand the multi-racial balance of the country and sensitivity of its people." If PAS is an "extremist and fundamentalist party", as always claimed by the Government, how could it ever propose such a move in a multi-racial country which is politically dominated by the Malays? It only proved that PAS as an Islamic Party, chose to accept leadership based on religious values, ie. Islam, and not on racial grounds. It further mean that, should there be a better Muslim leader of a non-Malay background, accepted by the majority of the people, just (*'adil*) and charismatic, trusted and willing to run the country in accordance to the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, then by all means he could lead the premiership with PAS blessings.

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<sup>12</sup>These principles are the trust of PAS Constitution.

<sup>13</sup>It is also notable to point out that although many political parties of Malaysia are based on racial hegemony such as the UMNO which congregates all the Malays in a single party, MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress) for the Indians and MCA (Malaysian Chinese Organization) for the Chinese.

<sup>14</sup>This is a very highly respected local title given to a very learned Guru of Islamic knowledge.

<sup>15</sup>Malaysia is a multi-racial state, dominated by the Western Imperialist power in the early 16th Century, first by the Portuguese in 1511, the Dutch in 1642 and finally from 1786 until 1957 by the British Colonials. Since independence until to date, all the Prime Ministers of Malaysia are Malays in origin and had led the UMNO as its President. Since Malaysia practices Constitutional Monarchy and adopt modern democracy, the people decides in every five years, their representatives to the Parliament. The Leader of the party that won the most seats during the Election, rule the country as the Prime Minister.

As mentioned above, the distinction between PAS and any other political parties in Malaysia is no doubt, **lies in its ideology**. As an ideological party, PAS believes strongly in Islam as its basis and its doctrine, in which PAS differentiate itself from any other parties. Any action or decision of the party must be justified against the doctrine of Islam. Any response to any political changes must be viewed and studied from and within the Islamic perspective, guided by the strong and deep-rooted PAS Islamic Council of '*Ulama*' (*Dewan 'Ulama*'). PAS looks at Islam as a whole and in total. It does not belief in parts thus views Islam as a total way of life. From this point of view, PAS differs from UMNO, the leading and ruling party. When PAS leaders say that their struggle is for Islam, it means that they are fighting for the realization of Islamic teachings and values as stipulated in the Holy *Qur'an* and in the *Hadith* of the Prophet (PBUH). It accepts and acknowledges all the efforts of institutionalization of many facets of modern economy of a State but nevertheless also accepts responsibility to institute *Syari'ah* (Islamic Law) as the only Divined Law that should be implemented in full as in accordance to the Holy *Qur'an* in the State. This is the basis of the ideology and the struggle of PAS.

In trying to address PAS's Islamic views based on the the PAS Constitution, the late Professor Zulkifli Muhammad,<sup>16</sup> said:-

"Everyone is created by Allah for a precise purpose, that is, to serve Allah and to do good to Him, so that he may be well-pleased by Allah and will have a role in the realization of Allah's pleasure. Man is responsible to do what is enjoined by Allah and to avoid what is forbidden by him. This is the obedience to Allah and fear (*taqwa*) of Him, the primary element of life for a Muslim."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Professor Zulkifli Muhammad, one of the brightest Muslim intellectual and architect of PAS contested in the first Malaysia General Election in 1955 on PAS ticket. He was then appointed as PAS Deputy Predisent the same year.

<sup>17</sup>Professor Zulkifli Muhammad, *The PAS Constitution (Arabic-lettered)*, n.d., p.1.

This is precisely what has been expressed exclusively in the Holy *Qur'an* when Allah the Almighty says:

*"I have only created Jinns and man, that they may serve Me!"*<sup>18</sup>

*"Verily, this brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me (and no other)."*<sup>19</sup>

As in accordance to the true teachings of Islam, Islam must be the sole guide for all Muslims without fail. From this very viewpoint, the life of a Muslim is not without aim and an objective which determines the entire human conscious action. *'Ibadah* (literally, worship) in Islam is a very wide term, ranging from one's spiritual act to Allah and to serving the whole nation and all mankind. From this very basic doctrine, the broad meaning of *'ibadah* is related very closely to this very important verse of the *Qur'an*:-

*"By (the token of) Time (through the Ages)! Verily man is in loss. Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of patience and Constancy."*<sup>20</sup>



Ustaz Abdul Hadi Awang (R), PAS deputy president also Terengganu state Chief Minister with the author at Parliament House.



At the PAS muktamar, annual convention.



Chief of the women wing presenting a paper at an International Seminar

<sup>18</sup>Al-*Qur'an*, surah adh-Dhariyat : 56.

<sup>19</sup>Al-*Qur'an*, surah al-Anbiya' : 92.

<sup>20</sup>Al-*Qur'an*, surah al-'Asr. : 1 - 3.



PAS is of the view that the life of human beings, especially the Muslims *Ummah* themselves, will be valuable only if it is utilized for the service of Allah, society and the State in accordance with the injunctions of Allah, without being rebellious to Allah and without doing harm to oneself and to others.<sup>21</sup> For PAS, Islam is not merely a system of beliefs, a system of dogmas to be strictly adhered to, but also a programme for action with a definite purpose and an objective to be performed by all Muslims. Thus, as early since its formation, PAS already sees Islam as an embodiment of all principles of Life and Man: politics, economics, social etc.

".....We have a guide for life.... Not only in the field of worship but in all fields: social, economic, political and government fields. But unfortunately, in their life our *Ummah* are groping in the darkness."<sup>22</sup>



*Ustaz Fadzil Nor, PAS president with other members debating during Parliament session.*



*Ustaz Nik Aziz Nik Mat (with turban), Kelantan state Chief Minister with non-muslim chinese community.*



*Scene at a election nomination day*

<sup>21</sup>Zulkifli Muhammad, *Pegangan Hidup Ummat Islam*, Kuala Lumpur. n.d., pp. 5-6.

<sup>22</sup>*Surah Islam*, official news letter of PAS, Vol. II, No. 5, April 1958, p.3.

# POLICY

Based on the above ideology, it is clear that all PAS policies must be Islamic in nature, truly in light of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. In doing so, PAS must ensure that in all its actions, whether in the political arena, economic platform or social activities, be it in the middle of short campaigns during the Elections, during heated debates in the Parliament or manning a simple bookshop, working in an office, is Islamic all inclusive. This is the requirement of a true Islamic Party and so is PAS. PAS will strive with whatever it has, to relinquish and refrain itself from any wrongdoings that are against the Islamic teachings as envisaged in the *Qur'an*. Its members should try their very best to maintain an exemplary identity so as to set a good moral and righteous standard at any place, at all times, be it during intellectual arguments in the Federal Parliament or State Assembly, or in schools, government offices, work places and so on and so forth.

Since PAS is an Islamic party, the propagation of *ad-Da'wah al-Islamiyyah* (the call for Islam) becomes part and parcel of its main activities. In this respect, as in accordance to the aim of establishing an Islamic State, there is no doubt that PAS consider itself as an Islamic Movement or *Harakah Islamiyyah* representing a *Jama'ah Muslimin*.<sup>23</sup> In this respect PAS also work hand in hand with other Islamic and *Da'wah* groups in the country for the sake of a common goal – to preach on the road towards Allah and Unity in the Name of God:-

*“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the Sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has frill Knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).”<sup>24</sup>*

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<sup>23</sup>In this context, it is true that most of PS early founders were all *ulamas* themselves and were trained in most universities of the Arab World, particularly in al-Azhar, Cairo. It is from there that the ideas of Muhammad Rashid Ridha, Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Muhammad 'Abdul, Hassan al-Banna, Syed Qutb, Sayyid Abu A'la-Maududi and others, greatly influenced them. Their deep understanding of Islam as a way of life plus their burning desire t free Malayan from the clutches of the Imperialism, brought about the very idea of establishing PAS as a new political front.

<sup>24</sup>*Al-Qur'an, surah al-Hujurat* : 13.



PAS believes and supports any **genuine** *Da'wah* organization, within Malaysia or beyond its boundary, who hail the same slogan: "*Allah is the Goal, al-Rasul is the Guide and al-Qur'an is the Constitution!*" The only main difference that could be seen from the any other *Da'wah* body within the Malaysian context, is that PAS is the only *Jama'ah Islamiyyah* that registered itself in the political platform and contested in the Elections. In light of this, Dato' Haji Fadzil bin Mohd. Noor, PAS present President and also Opposition Leader of the Malaysian Parliament, once clarified:-

"We (PAS) have won Kelantan through the process of Constitution. We have accepted the parliamentary democracy system, just like what UMNO believes. Due to this fact, we hope that the democratic system that is being practiced now will allow us to represent the *rakyat* (people) democratically."<sup>25</sup>

To some organizations, and also certain of their leaders, this political participation of PAS in the domain of modern democracy "*reduces PAS originality as a Da'wah group preaching Islam as a religion*". However, we strongly maintain that the true essence of religion of Islam is definitely not as what they have understood - segregate politics from everyday social and economical life. Islam as they perceived, is partitioned from everyday life : Islam is only conformed to rituals in the mosques and at home. This is exactly how Islam was being interpreted by earlier Western scholars like Snouck Hungronje, Ignas Goldziher, D.S. Margoliouth, Joseph Schact, Wilfred Cantweld Smith, and also their Muslim students such as Ziya Gokalp, Taha Hussain, Ali Abdul Raziq and many others (just to mention a few).

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<sup>25</sup>A Keynote Presidential Address delivered during *Muktamar PAS ke-38* (PAS 38th Annual General Assembly) on 14 August 1992 at *Balai Islam Lundang*, Kelantan, Malaysia.

In light of that, PAS maintained that it will retain its policy to contest in the Elections as long as the Malaysian Constitutional democracy permits them to do so. PAS's policy of *muwajahah silmiyyah*<sup>26</sup> is maintained and PAS will make full use of the existing political domain to represent Malaysians in the Parliament. At least, until we lead a majority voice and has every solemn right to rule with clear conscience and legitimate power, we shall prove to all Malaysians that our Parliamentarians<sup>27</sup> will serve as able *watchdogs* in ensuring that the Rule of Law still prevail in the country and that no one is above the Constitution.

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<sup>26</sup>Literally means 'peaceful confrontation'. PAS adopted this concept in the 80s so as to redefine its participation in the political scene, taking advantage of the democratic parliamentary system of Malaysia. As long the Rule of Law still prevail in Malaysia, as protected by the Federal Constitution, PAS will contest in every Malaysia General Election without fail. To PAS, this serves as a minor *jihād* (Islamic struggle) for the *Ummah* (Islamic community).

<sup>27</sup>It is proud to announce that during the last election, a number of Muslim intellectuals from the Institutes of Higher Learning contested in the Election and won on PAS ticket. This gives a popular support to PAS and a hard blow to the National Front.

## ***PAS's Political Struggle to Implement Syari'ah Laws in Malaysia***

Academicians say that for every political party, power is the ultimate goal. But never let our lust for power to overcome and bring us to the brink of downfall, for "*absolute power corrupts absolutely.*" For PAS, winning the election is one hurdle, but to fulfill the pledges and duly carrying out the responsibilities in accordance to the Islamic principles, is totally another and that's what finally counts. The electorate will then always have another chance to rethink about their choice of candidates for the next time!

PAS, being an Islamic Party, does not totally reliable upon its ability to withstand the election. Even without being able to gain full power so as to rule the country, PAS has always programmed itself as an Islamic movement that propagates *da'wah* to the people.

PAS has always maintained its view of forming an Islamic State in Malaysia if it gets a total blessing from the people among the electorates. But, an Islamic State within a plural society? Even if all the Malay-Muslims accept it, will the non-Muslim Malaysians comprising of the Chinese and Indians accept *Syari'ah* Law being imposed on them? Could it be actually realized in today's modern political practice? These are the "big questions" brought about by the ruling party especially UMNO. UMNO's contention is based on the fact that "Malaysia is a multi racial nation and that the non-Muslims will never accept PAS's intention of *Islamizing* the non-Muslims" and "enforcing the other non-Muslims to accept Muslim Laws are unconstitutional"<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Article 11 of the Constitution states that, "Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion." Please see for example, Tun Mohamed Suffian bin Hashim, *An Introduction to the Constitution of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1976, pp. 218-219. PAS respect this clause verymuch. Looking on the other side of the argumunt, it is because of protecting the Muslims' rights that forces PAS to take the initiation to defend their rights through the process of democratic parliamentary election.

The struggle to implement *Syari'ah* Law if PAS wins the Election has always been the main target ever since the formation of PAS.<sup>29</sup> Due to that, PAS struggled to explain and elaborate the contents of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* to the people towards the formation of the Islamic State. During Prophet Muhammad time, the state was established in Madinah upon agreement of all the Muslims and non-Muslims under one rule based on the *Syari'ah* as expressed by clearly in the *Sirah*:-

"The Muslims of Medina had been given by the Prophet the title of al-Ansar, which means Helpers, whereas the Muslims of Quraysh and other tribes who had left their homes and emigrated to the oasis he called, Muhajirah, that is Emigrants. All took part in the work (to build a mosque)...."

"It was also to be hoped that these two parties would be strengthened by a third, and the Prophet now made a covenant of mutual obligation between his followers and the Jews of the Oasis, forming them into a single community of believers but allowing for the differences between the two religions. Muslims and Jews were to have equal status. If a Jew were wronged, then he must be helped to his rights by both Muslim and Jew, and so also if a Muslim were wronged. In case of war against the polytheists they must fight as one people, and neither Jews nor Muslims were to make a separate peace, but peace was to be indivisible. In case of differences in opinion or dispute or controversy, the matter was to be referred to God through his Messenger. There was, however, no express stipulation that the Jews should formally recognize Muhammad as the Messenger and Prophet of God, though he was referred to as such throughout the document."<sup>30</sup>

This State comprises of a mixture of:-

- (i) The *Ansar* - the original inhabitants of Yathrib – Muslims and the non-Muslims.
- (ii) The *Muhajirah* - Muslims from Mecca following the Prophet (PBUH).
- (iii) The Jews - Inhabitants of Yathrib – non-Muslims.

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<sup>29</sup>Abu Bakar Chi, *Al-Hizbu'l-Islami al-Malizia*, Amman, Dar al-Bayarik, 1999. Abu Bakar Chik was the former PAS's Head of Youth.

<sup>30</sup>Abu Bakar Siraj al-Din (Dr. Martin Lings), *Muhammad - His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983, pp. 123-124. This *sirah* document written in English by a prominent Traditional Islamic scholar has been accepted as a classic and accepted worldwide about the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) based on earliest Arabic sources of the eight and ninth century.

This clearly shows that the society that was united by the Prophet (PBUH) in Madinah during that time was a **plural, multi-racial and heterogeneous in nature**. And as stated in history, all of them agreed to be ruled under the Prophet based on the *Syari'ah*, Law of the Muslims. Is it not identical in nature that Malaysia is a also plural, multi-racial and heterogeneous society just like it was in Madinah 1400 years ago? And why all the fuss that "*Syari'ah* Law could not be implemented in Malaysia!" Therefore PAS continues in its struggle to educate the people of Malaysia – Muslims as well as non Muslims – to understand the very basic teachings of Islam: the systems of *'Aqidah* (faith), *'Ibadah* (worship), *Munakahat* (family) and *Mu'amalat* (social, economic and political system).<sup>31</sup>

As mentioned in the earlier para above, PAS is an Islamic Movement that concentrate its activities based on two platforms – education and also politics. Although Malaysia is not an Islamic State and in fact is a secular one, the Western ideas of democracy allow PAS to participate in the general elections held every 5 years to give an option to the Muslims and also the non-Muslims to vote the Islamic voice and represent them in the Parliament and State Assemblies seats. Since 1990, PAS managed to rule Kelantan , now in its third term, and in November 1999, another State, Terengganu fell to PAS administration.

PAS did try to propose the *Hudud* Laws, as a first part of the *Syari'ah* Law to be implemented in Kelantan. After it was passed by the State Assembly, and after running through a lot of problems, it went to a deadlock and was opposed strongly by the Federal Government.<sup>32</sup> Terengganu now plans to institute parts of the Islamic Laws in its administration such as the principles of *al-Hisbah* <sup>33</sup> (Ombudsman).

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<sup>31</sup>These concepts were already professed by the early 'ulamas of PAS such as Ustadh Ahmad Azam, PAS Commissioner of Terengganu in his book, *Kenapa Kita Berjuang*, Bukit Mertajam, 1959, pp. 4-5.

<sup>32</sup>There are many aspects of the *Syari'ah* Laws which are misinterpreted and misunderstood by the Muslims themselves, moreover for the non-Muslims who are always cautious and skeptical of it, particularly the dictum that *Syari'ah* Laws institute "cutting of hands for those who steals". In Malaysia, State Laws remains valid and overrule the State as stipulated in Article 75 of the Constitution, the highest Law in the country.

<sup>33</sup>An academic seminar on *Hisbah* was organized by The State of Terengganu on 4 August 2000 to find the best ways to formulate the Ombudsman system for the State. It is the first of its kind in Malaysia.

Due to the latest development in Malaysia considering that PAS managed to rule two of the 14 States, perhaps it is timely that PAS launch a widespread campaign to explain its Islamic policy to the people. The people has been confused by UMNO and its coalition. Inevitably, it is most important for PAS to explain to two of the States, that many aspects of the *Syari'ah* Laws will actually protect its citizens from various malpractice of its politicians as compared to the present Civil Laws.

PAS's struggle shall not cease here. We understood very well that the struggle to establish Allah's *Syari'ah* on Earth, as started by the early Prophets until Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is a very long and winding journey, as warned by God Himself:-

*"If there had been immediate gain (in sight), and the journey is easy, they would (all) without doubt have followed you, but the distance was long (and weighed) on them. They would indeed swear by Allah: 'If we only could, we should certainly have come out with you". They would destroy their own souls; for Allah does know that they are certainly lying.*"<sup>34</sup>

We will continue to pursue our aims and objectives within our reach to realize our ultimate goal – the Islamic State based on the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. If we fail or could not be able to realize this goal now during our times, then our children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and so forth will proceed this struggle. The struggle will definitely continue based on the same ideology, and perhaps with certain adjustments in the policy, but inevitably the very same struggle for the same objectives and goal as clarified clearly in the *Qur'an*:-

*"And fight on them until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevails justice and faith in Allah...."*<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>*Al-Qur'an, surah at-Tawbah : 42.*

<sup>35</sup>*Al-Qur'an, surah al-Anfal : 39.*



## VISION

As we approach the new millennium, it is perhaps useful to be reminded that, we especially the Asians, whom were once upon a time were dominated by the West, to do so with utmost caution, bearing in mind that there are no ground whatsoever for any idealism built on the sands of illusion. But, definitely a new Asia is on the rise and Asia could not be stopped. Its true that Asia, especially Southeast Asia faces the most devastating economic downturn that almost caused a Doomsday for some Asean countries, nevertheless there is still light at the end of the tunnel for Asia. Asia will rise again, and for the better!

The rise of Asia has always been regarded as the Asian Renaissance.<sup>36</sup> Anwar Ibrahim, the ousted Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia,<sup>37</sup> defined it as “revival of the arts and sciences under the influence of classical models based on strong moral and religious foundations; a cultural resurgence by a reflowering of art and literature, architecture and music and advancements in science and technology.”<sup>38</sup> “While sharing many similarities such as the recourse to the classical eras of the various Asian traditions, the Asian Renaissance,” asserts Anwar, “however, differs fundamentally from the European in that it has its foundations in religion and traditions – Islam, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity being the major ones.”<sup>39</sup> Despite centuries of change and transformation, Asia retains its religious character. The Asian Man, claimed Anwar, at heart is *persona religiosus*. In short, to Anwar, religion plays an important and significant role in Asia.

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<sup>36</sup>Malaysian leaders often speak of this renaissance including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad. Please see for example, his speech entitled, “An Asian Renaissance for a New Asia” delivered at the New Asia Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 11 January 1996 and also “The Asian Renaissance”, delivered at the Regional Conference of the Harvard Clubs of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 15 August 1996.

<sup>37</sup>Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was sacked as the Deputy Prime Minister on 2 September 1998, tried in the High Court and convicted on two charges of bribery (jailed 6 years). Later on 8 August 2000, charged for sodomy for another 9 years, sentence to commence after 6 years from the first sentencing. It is no doubt, the trial of the century for Malaysia. Anwar’s dismissal was widely covered all over the world thus a special website was created for this reason. Anwar is now serving his 6-year jail term in Sungai Buloh Prison, Selangor, awaiting for an appeal for his second sentence yet to be heard. Many political analysts, within Malaysia and abroad regard Anwar as the most promising upcoming Asian leader, heir apparent to Mahathir until his downfall. Thousands of his supporters, in and outside the government, strongly believes that Mahathir’s political conspiracy intended to destro Anwar’s future permanently.

<sup>38</sup>Anwar Ibrahim, *The Asian Renaissance*, Singapore: Times Books International, 1997, pp. 17-18.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

Many views have been projected against the future of Asia. Inevitably Asia, in its effort to rise in the new millennium will have to face many challenges : domestic reform and revolution, regional cooperation and friendship, productive new world order,<sup>40</sup> construction of just and realistic security arrangement, globalization and the borderless world of information technology , cultural solidarity<sup>41</sup>, redefinition of democracy and social justice as against the Western concept etc. etc....

We view the next millennium as a **challenge for Islam to propose its doctrine as a solution for social justice, true practice of modern democracy, advancement for peace, sustainable development and a “new world order”**. Since Asia, particularly East Asia is religio-centric in nature and that the religious influences are still intact, Islam could be seen as a very strong cohesive power within the region. Why not? Let us not forget the fact that when the Romans conquered Palestine, the Jews were expelled, reducing them to *Jewish Diaspora*; nevertheless when ‘Umar al-Khattab, the second Muslim Caliph conquered Palestine, the Christians and Jews were protected!

Freedom, justice, peace and equality have always been the virtues of every state. Through the process of democracy, leaders of nations of the world tried to pursue various strategies and overcome thousands of hurdles in the hope of attaining political stability, economic prosperity and harmonious social stature. Since Aristotle, the term *state* and *politics* have been redefined by many social scientists to find the most appropriate and conducive means of life, but alas – the world politics, was and has always been unstable. People of the world seems to forget their own roots – from where life begins and why are mankind created in this worldly life? To a Muslim, the answer has been clearly written in the Holy Qur’an more than 1400 years ago – the only Way to understand oneself, one World and One God!

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<sup>40</sup>As projected by Dr. Mahathir Mohammed in his speech, “An Asian Renaissance for a New Asia,” at the *New Asia Forum*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 11 January 1996.

<sup>41</sup>Anwar Ibrahim, *The Asian Renaissance*, Singapore: Times Books International, 1997, pp. 131-135.

When we propose Islam to be the cohesive power between Asians, we do not mean to ignore other religions and great traditions of the East. Even if Islam rule, non-Muslims will always be protected under the *Syria'ah*. History has proven the case where Muslims have shown utmost tolerance and diplomacy. Let us not forget that when Prophet Muhammad signed the *Hudaybiyyah* Treaty with the non-Muslims, the Prophet did compromise up to the extent of agreeing not to write his name as the "*Muhammad Rasulu'Llah (Muhammad the messenger of Allah)* but *Muhammad bin Abdullah*"<sup>42</sup> as against the strong protests coming from the *sahabah* (companions of the Prophet).<sup>43</sup> To the Prophet, the object of getting the Treaty agreed and signed by the non-Muslims was far more important than discussing details that could have ended up with disagreement and to fall back to square one. We learnt from here how Islam interacts with non-Muslims with great concern, as long as the non-Muslims obey the *Syari'ah* fully and support the State and the Muslim leader as the *Imam*..

There is no doubt that Islam has been the most misunderstood religion of the world, partly due to the behaviours (*akhlaq*) of the Muslims themselves for not being able to be exemplary to the non-Muslims. Likewise, Muslim nations are often at war with one another, but at the same time could be more than brotherly with other non-Muslim states. This situation has brought the Islamic World to congregate and rethink about their future and destiny. The Middle East problem resulted in Israel's existence since 1948 and the Palestinians were left without a state - *Masjidil Aqsa* was robbed from the Muslim World! We sincerely think that its time for Muslims to prove to the world, as they did during the Dark Ages of Europe, that Muslim would be able to rule with justice and maintain peace to the world order.

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<sup>42</sup>There is a great difference in it whereby *Muhammad Rasulu'Llah* confirms himself as the Prophet of Allah. This has been rejected by the non-Muslims up to the extent that they will not sign the Treaty if it is written as such. The Prophet condoned to the non-Muslims request instead.

<sup>43</sup>Abu Bakar Siraj ad-Din, *Muhammad – His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983.

## CONCLUSION

In reviewing the cause of large scale imperialism against many Muslim states by the West, an Islamic scholar once said:-

"The main target of western imperialism was the Islamic faith and culture everywhere including Europe, the Middle East, South Asia and Africa. Culture represents beliefs, values, attitudes and manners of a society and these precisely were the areas where the greatest erosions was caused by western imperialism. The destruction of Muslim cultural identity was the the principal aim of western imperialism in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>44</sup>

The non-Muslims must not be afraid of the Muslims or the *Syari'ah*. What the Muslim world has lost today is the confidence of the non-Muslims in Islam due to the failure of Muslims to profess their faith as in accordance to the Holy *Qur'an*. That's why we propose the slogan "going back to the *Qur'an*" is most appropriate for the Muslims of today. Great Muslim civilization were once Gurus of the West in terms of sciences, philosophy, architecture and many other fields of knowledge – "knowledge triumphant", borrowing the terms of Franz Rosenthal.<sup>45</sup>

The West that dominated the World today, through their intellectuals like Samuel P. Huntington,<sup>46</sup> also foresees the future as "the clash between civilizations between East and West." Believe it or not, deep in their hearts, the West is always aware of the rising sun from the East in the new millennium. Already World Bank had forecasted that China will emerge as the greatest world economic power above the United States in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Perhaps it could it be true after all that 21<sup>st</sup> century will be Asian's.....

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<sup>44</sup>Altaf Gauhar, "Western Cultural imperialism – An Old Problem, A New Challenge", paper presented in *Seminar Dakwah Islamiyyah di Asia dan Pasifik* (Islamic Da'wah Seminar in Asia and the Pacific), Kuala Lumpur, 24-28 February 1977.

<sup>45</sup>Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970.

<sup>46</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of the Civilisation?*, USA, 1993. He also later wrote *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996.



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