

of the Muslim World (KISDI), the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation (DDII) and figures like Prabowo and Fadli Zon, the Salafi were brought into this elite company via their charismatic emerging young leader Jafar Umar Thalib.

The book's most important contribution perhaps, is in the close study and depiction of Jafar Umar Thalib. From his Yemeni background, Saudi connections and Afghan war experience, to his publishing, preaching and role as educator in Indonesia in the late 1980s and 1990s, Thalib's biography as told here is both emblematic and distinctive. It presents us with an insight into those many men from Indonesia and elsewhere in the Muslim world, who followed a similar path to Islamic militantism and anti-west radicalism during the 1980s and 1990s. But it also highlights how critical was the presence of such an exceptional charismatic personality and leader in order to mobilise so many in a short period. Hasan's rare access to and interviews with the young Laskar Jihad cadre themselves, further provides the reader with a rare glimpse into the worlds of men we too often dismiss with brands and stereotypes as 'extremists' and 'terrorists'. Whilst the movement within which they were a part was undeniably global in its reach, concerns and backing, Hasan depicts Laskar Jihad as very much a product of the national political, religious and social conditions in Indonesia at that time. Most of the thousands of young recruits who volunteered to fight in the Moluccan conflict were, Hasan observes, the product of the failed modernisation programme of the New Order regime. The disillusionment and disappointment of these newly urbanised young men in the face of unfulfilled promises of affluence and success led them to search elsewhere for fulfilment and sense of purpose in the community. Hasan's belief that 'jihadi Islam remains on the political periphery' (p. 221) in Indonesia gives some comfort; however the question remains of course, where are these men today and in what cause or community are they finding their sense of purpose?

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Papua: Geopolitics and the quest for nationhood

By BILVEER SINGH

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Books on Papua by eminent international scholars and academic presses are rare and far in between. There are not many books that will stand to scrutiny as landmark works. Some useful contributions in this regard would include Djopari's work on the Independent Papua Movement, Pender's history of Papua, and Saltford's study on the United Nations' whitewashing of Papua's integration into Indonesia. Combining all these strands and going much deeper, Bilveer Singh's book comes as a major break, positioning the problem within a political, geopolitical, ethnic and military context, something that has not been seen before in such a comprehensive manner.

This scholarly research is the latest and probably the most important for a number of reasons. It is undertaken by a Southeast Asian Indonesianist who understands the 'pushes' and 'pulls' of Indonesian and regional politics. It was a consequence of extended fieldwork in Papua and with the Papuan diaspora. Singh's fieldwork to Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and in Europe, has never before been undertaken in such a detailed manner. More pertinently, Singh is probably the first scholar to have interviewed the various wings and commands of the Insependent Papua Movement based in Papua and Papua New Guinea, especially its founder, T.T. Aronggear. Singh also succeeded in interviewing key opponents of the Independent Papua Movement.

The book is structured into five main sections. The introduction succinctly introduces the Papua *problematique*, explaining how the issue surfaced in the late 1940s. Chapter One describes the Papua Portrait, positioning Papua within Indonesian history and most interestingly, analyses the etymology of Papua, something that has been taken for granted by most observers. The detailed research on Papua's ethnicity and tribalism is a significant contribution, leading the author to conclude the importance of culture as the key template of Papuan society. Chapter Two analyses the contestation for supremacy in Papua culminating in Indonesia's triumph, following the United States-led pressure to ensure that Indonesia did not join the Soviet-camp in the ongoing Cold War. Chapter Three, one of central aspects of the study, explains the divide between Papua and Indonesia, especially as a result of Suharto's 'internal colonialism' of Papua.

Chapter Four is a clear reminder that Papua is not merely a province in Indonesia but a 'nation without a state'. The study makes evident that the political-military struggle and the potential for escalation is something that cannot be ignored. Chapter Five analyses the geopolitical aspects of the Papuan struggle and what this will mean for the Papuans, Indonesia and the various international stakeholders. Due to the rising 'insecuritisation' of Papua, the study examines the various options that are available to prevent the conflict from worsening. The book ends with an excellent bibliography, index and a unique appendix that list the various 'support organisations' worldwide in favour of Papua's quest for nationhood.

Unlike many other works, this book is based on various primary sources; historical documents from archives, important statements and publications of leaders and most importantly, interviews with actors in the Papuan conflict. This book probably contains some of the most detailed interviews with key Papuan freedom fighters such as: Nicolaas Jouwe, Jacob Prai, Seth Rumkorem, Thaha Alhamid, Tom Beanal, Willy Mandowen, Andy Ajamseba and John Otto Ondawame.

On the whole, this is an excellent book and probably the best ever written on the subject. It dispassionately dissects the Papuan problem and lays it bare. Failure to address the plethora of problems and challenges will lead, the author warns, to untold consequences, especially as the Papuans find themselves becoming an object of Indonesia and various stakeholders' exploitation. While the book's strengths are manifold, at times, the author simplifies the political situation in Papua. The divide among Papuans, despite the rise of nationalism, remains as wide as ever. Though this aspect was stated, the cost and meaning of this 'internal fracture' was not dealt in detail. Also, the role of the co-opted Papuan elites who have continued to operate as Jakarta's 'fifth column' was not discussed. Finally, the sheer power asymmetry

between Indonesia and Papua, though mentioned, could have been analysed further to highlight the potentials and limits of Papuans' quest for nationhood. Notwithstanding these minor reservations, Singh's book provides a benchmark of the type of studies that are likely to emerge on Papua in the future.

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