



## National Defense University

### NU General Secretary Addresses Indonesia's Defense Establishment:

**“Indonesia is strategically positioned to foster global stability and help ensure the survival of the post-WWII international order”**

**“Our founding fathers strove to create a new world order built upon justice and the equality of nations”**

BOGOR, Indonesia: On November 10, 2021, Nahdlatul Ulama General Secretary KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf addressed the assembled faculty, staff and students at Indonesia's National Defense University, stating that Indonesia has a strategic role to play in preserving and strengthening the post-WWII international order, as well as shaping its future.

“It is time for us to realize this great potential and act wisely, so that Indonesia's influence among the community of nations may steadily rise, reflecting its status as the world's fourth most populous country and sixteenth largest economy... As the world moves towards a new equilibrium between major powers, Indonesia has a vital interest in preserving and strengthening our current, rules-based international order. Likewise, the international community has a strategic interest in ensuring that Indonesia remains strong, independent and sovereign,” Mr. Staquf told senior members of Indonesia's defense establishment.

The following text is a summary of Mr. Staquf's remarks, edited for publication:

Our current world order is relatively young and fragile, having emerged from the ruins of a prior global order characterized by imperialism and colonialism. For thousands of years, the world was ruled according to the principle of “might makes right.”

Dominant ethnic or religious groups conquered and subordinated others who were weak, if they did not choose to annihilate or enslave them. In doing so they created various empires. Examples include the ancient Persians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Ottoman Turks, Tsarist Russia and other European powers, including the Dutch.

Indonesia's founding fathers dared to resist this injustice and fought to secure our nation's independence from Dutch colonialism, an achievement we [celebrate](#) every year on August 17<sup>th</sup>. In stark contrast to so many victims of historical injustice, they chose to renounce hatred or revenge, and instead built our nation upon the principle of equal rights for every citizen of Indonesia.

Our founders articulated their vision for a new international order — founded upon the equal rights and dignity of every human being — in the Preamble to Indonesia's Constitution, which was promulgated months before the ratification of the United Nations Charter. The Preamble to our Constitution reads:

“Whereas independence is the inalienable right of all nations, therefore, colonialism must be abolished throughout the world, as it is not in conformity with humanitarianism and justice.”

Our founding fathers did not merely seek independence for the inhabitants of Indonesia. Rather, they envisioned a world in which the peoples of every nation on earth could live a sovereign, independent and dignified life. This spirit lies at the heart of Indonesia’s Declaration of Independence, just as it animates the subsequently adopted United Nations Charter and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. Staquf’s address — delivered to both senior military personnel and students at Indonesia’s prestigious National Defense University — underlines the increasingly active role the world’s largest Muslim organization is playing on the world stage, under the guidance of Nahdlatul Ulama spiritual leaders including [Kyai Haji A. Mustofa Bisri](#), former Chairman of the NU Supreme Council; the Honorable [Yaqut Cholil Qoumas](#), Indonesia’s current Minister of Religious Affairs; [H. Muhaimin Iskandar](#), Chairman of Indonesia’s largest Islamic political party, the NU-based PKB; and Mr. Staquf himself.

During a five-day visit to Washington, DC, in July of 2021, Mr. Staquf delivered a related message to nearly 1,000 civil society and government leaders during a [keynote address](#) to the International Religious Freedom Summit. A bipartisan array of current and former U.S. government officials addressed the IRF Summit, including Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, former Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, current Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and Samuel D. Brownback, former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.

The previous day, Hudson Institute [hosted](#) Mr. Staquf and former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency/U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo for a wide-ranging discussion titled “Religious Freedom and a Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” the first meeting between the two statesmen since Secretary Pompeo [addressed](#) leaders of the Humanitarian Islam movement in Jakarta on October 29, 2020, days before the U.S. presidential election.

From 2020 – 2021, Mr. Staquf served on Policy Exchange’s 16-member Indo-Pacific Commission — chaired by former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper — whose [report](#) was praised by current and former Prime Ministers of Japan, Australia, and the United Kingdom for its compelling vision of “a sustainable rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific that is resilient but adaptable to the great power realities of the 21st century.”

In October of 2021, an elite network of global policymakers, business leaders, academics and statesmen affiliated with the Ditchley Foundation convened with Mr. Staquf and Bayt ar-Rahmah’s Director of Strategic Outreach, Thomas Dinham, for a hybrid in-person and virtual conference held at Ditchley Park, titled “The Indo-Pacific: how can we best promote strategic stability, economic growth and the rule of law in the region?”

A favored wartime retreat of British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, Ditchley served as a secret base during the early years of World War II and was the site of Churchill’s meeting with presidential envoy Harry Hopkins, a crucial point in British efforts to win American support for the struggle against Nazi Germany.