

The Talk Radio News Service

Former Indonesian President speaks out against Muslim Extremism

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Today at George Washington University, Former Indonesian President His Excellency Kyai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid, also known as "Gus Dur", addressed an auditorium of Muslim students, onlookers and media members urging young Muslims to "reclaim authentic Islam."



President Wahid served as Indonesia's "first democratically elected president from 1999-2001 and remains the leader of the National Awakening Party (PKB), which he established after the fall of Suharto in 1998." A highly-regarded and much respected Muslim cleric, he has led the Nahdlatul Ulama, the world's largest Islamic organization with forty million members.

He is a strong advocate for religious tolerance and a proponent of many democratic ideals. "When addressing Muslim audiences, Gus Dur invariably reminds his listeners that it is their sacred duty to respect others' beliefs, and to avoid any form of discrimination or intolerance towards those who worship differently from themselves."

C. Holland Taylor and President Wahid co-founded the LibForAll Foundation which is the "world's foremost supporter of peaceful, moderate, and progressive Muslim's in their fight against well-financed radical Muslim extremists characterized by an intolerant understanding of Islam."



The event was also co-sponsored by The American Islamic Congress through its Project Nur program, which is based on numerous college campuses and emphasizes the positive relationships between Muslim students and students of other religions. President Wahid, often called a moderate Muslim, is sometimes seen as controversial due to some of his pro western ideals.

After the President of Iran's claims about the Holocaust being a myth, President Wahid, although claiming to be a friend of the Iranian President, said that this stance was wrong citing that history will stand for itself. At a recent one-day conference on the island of Bali, there was a gathering of religious leaders and victims of terrorist attacks. Present was President Wahid, Hindu spiritual head Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Buddhist teachers, a Jesuit priest and rabbis. This kind of gathering is unprecedented in today's world and speaks to the message that President Wahid is trying to push.