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## Defeating the Jakarta bombers is imperative

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NCR Today

The bombings at two hotels in Jakarta are sad from every angle. First, of course, there is the immediate loss of life and the suffering of those families who have lost their loved ones.

But, a second sadness emerges quickly and has geo-strategic import. Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world but when you visit it, as I was lucky enough to do some 15 years ago, you realize pretty quickly that the mullahs are not in charge.

In fact, the most prominent Muslim is the Sultan who, although he no longer runs the country, possesses that moderation of outlook which actual governance forces upon a person. This moderation seeped deeply into the national character and was evident in most of the conversations I had while there. This moderation existed despite the fact that the Suharto regime, which was still in power at the time, had come to power brutally and continued to exert its authoritarian influence on the culture.

The radical Islamicist terrorists who carried out today's attacks, bent on showering destruction and destabilization upon this island nation, must be defeated before they can get a foothold for their grievances among the Indonesian people. America must continue to aid Indonesia as it seeks to modernize, to make sure that despair is not feeding the minds of the young, leading to the kind of resentments that make for fertile terrorist recruiting grounds. Nothing is more important to the future relationship of the West with the Islamic world than the cultivation of a moderate Muslim culture.

You can also be sure, that whatever the specific motivations of the murderers in Jakarta, they would not likely have forsworn their crimes if Bibi Netanyahu had decided to stop building settlements on the West Bank. I do not doubt that an end to settlement construction will make peace in the Mideast more likely, but remember Jakarta the next time you hear someone blame Israel for all the hatreds that animate the

Muslim world.

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