ASIAN CONFLICTS REPORT
THE GEOPOLITICS OF EXTREMISM: ISIS IN ASIA

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

August 2015

© Adem Salvarcioglu/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

"Indonesian people read the holy book Quran as more than 50,000 Indonesian Muslims gathered in Solo, to protest against the attacks of the Islamic state in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)."

FROM THE EDITORS

1

by Carl Ungerer

Asia and Europe share a border, but not much else. Although the Mongols invaded Eastern Europe, and Marco Polo made it to China, a common assumption among policy makers and academics alike has been that the security challenges and perspectives between these contiguous continents have had little in common, and less to learn from each other. Past efforts to build academic and policy bridges have been nascent at best.

But today's threats to global and regional security have no problem crossing international borders. From the rise of violent extremism to the threat of pandemic diseases and cyber criminals, solutions to security problems will overwhelm any national, or indeed regional, effort to 'go it alone'. Increasingly, as transnational threats become simultaneously local and global, the challenge for countries across both Asia and Europe is to find points of common interest and opportunities for genuine security cooperation.

Europe's interest in Asian security dynamics is growing. Beyond the mechanised ritual of summitry and academic seminars, an increasingly outward looking security community in Europe is interested in a more nuanced and granular understanding of Asia. And, while Europe's past is not necessarily Asia's future, there are important lessons for policy practitioners in the intersection of nationalism and conflict prevention.

It is this growing confluence of interests and outlook between Asia and Europe that gave impetus for the re-establishment of the Asian Conflicts Report. The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), a leading centre for executive education, research and dialogue at the heart of international Geneva, has a mandate to explore global security with the broadest possible lens. We are pleased, therefore, to become the new institutional home for the Asian Conflicts Report (ACR), and are committed to building on the strong network of security scholars and practitioners that are the foundation of the

wider international security community created by the Council for Asian Terrorism Research (CATR). As my co-partners in this endeavour, I sincerely thank Katy Oh Hassig and our editor, Caroline Ziemke-Dickens, for their outstanding efforts over the past decade to build up the CATR network, and their dedication and commitment to seeing the return of the Asian Conflicts Report at GCSP.

When Europeans cross over into Asia along the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul, they are still required to pay a small toll. If the return on that investment is greater cooperation and a deeper understanding of Asian security, then it is well worth the price.

Dr Carl Ungerer is Head of the Leadership, Crisis and Conflict Management Programme at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP).

2
by Katy Oh Hassig

The Council for Asian Terrorism Research (CATR) was founded in 2005 as a consortium of think tanks, academic institutes, and individual researchers to promote research from diverse academic and cultural perspectives. Its mission is to build a network of Asian researchers that combines specialist country-based expertise in terrorism and political violence, specialist language and cultural skills, and career expertise from a range of governmental and non-governmental disciplines. From its original six member institutions, representing Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and the United States, CATR's membership grew to include twenty institutions from 15 nations across the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions.

Between 2005 and 2013, CATR pursued its vision of producing high-quality, collaborative publications on topics related to terrorism and political violence in a series of bi-annual regional forums. At these symposia, experts engaged in serious and frank discussions on topics of shared concern, resulting in the publication of reports that provide regional and global policymakers with access to fresh perspectives on terrorism and other trans-national threats. Unfortunately,

CATR engagement was suspended in 2013 as a result of funding cutbacks from key supporting governments. However, in the face of this challenging policy environment, CATR's Board of Directors remained committed to the promotion of what they saw as a vital effort to engage in global outreach and collaborative research. Although CATR symposia were no longer held, members of the CATR network remained in contact to share information and insights. The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) has now generously provided a means of rejuvenating CATR's mission. Dr. Carl Ungerer, a former CATR board member representing Australia and now Head of the GCSP's Leadership, Crisis and Conflict Management Programme, is promoting the revival of the Asian Conflicts Report. Recent events – from the lone wolf massacre in Norway and the ISIS-inspired attacks on journalists in Paris, to the shooting of coffee drinkers in Sydney and beach goers in Tunisia – clearly demonstrate that the threat from violent extremism is everywhere. The political and regional boundaries that once provided natural and institutional barriers to the spread of criminal, extremist ideologies, and other transnational threats are now history. The globalisation of crime and terrorism is here to stay.

For this reason, the scope of the new Asian Conflicts Report will shift to a broader exploration of the links between the strategic and policy challenges facing the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions on the one hand, and Europe on the other. Combining the experience and analytical prowess of the CATR network with the GCSP promises to provide powerful new insights into emerging transnational and trans-regional threats and challenges including, but not limited to, the spread of violent extremism.

Dr. Katy Oh Hassig is a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and Asian Specialist at the Institute for Defense Analyses.

© tropicalpixsingapore

3

by Caroline F. Ziemke-Dickens

Welcome to Asian Conflicts Report 2.0. The first issue of the original Asian Conflicts Report, published in January 2009, was subtitled "Obama's Asian Challenge". In it, experts from across the Asia-Pacific region offered advice to a new American president concerning the likely challenges his administration would face in the years ahead. Among the policy messages included in that issue were: failure to dismantle the jihadist structure in Pakistan will raise the global threat level; Southeast Asia straddles key global trade routes, is home to important progressive Islamist traditions, and should not be placed on the strategic back-burner; the situation in Afghanistan will not improve unless and until the United States takes action against terrorist sanctuaries in Pakistan; a successful peace settlement and reconciliation in Sri Lanka could demonstrate that even the most intractable conflicts are resolvable; and that the rising tension in Northeast Asia will put increasing pressure on the strategic partnership between the United States and China.

In 2015, as we re-inaugurate the Asian Conflicts Report and President Obama enters the final months of his second term, we can look back and see how prescient the analyses in ACR 1-1 turned out to be. The failure to take early steps to dismantle jihadist strongholds in Pakistan has enabled the Taliban to reassert its influence in Afghanistan, brought Pakistan to the brink of failure, and forced the Obama Administration to pursue an operationally successful but politically damaging drone strike campaign in Pakistan's tribal regions. Southeast Asia – and the South China Sea in particular – has become, as Robert D. Kaplan has called it, "Asia's Cauldron" and the United States, after a decade of almost exclusive military and strategic focus on the Middle East, is struggling to reassert its influence across the region. Sri Lanka has peace, but reconciliation has been slower in coming. And Japan, in the face of increasing concerns over China's more assertive military presence and North Korea's nuclear program, is revising is post-World War II pacifist military stance.

In its three-year run from 2009-12, the ACR encouraged our authors to be provocative and forward-looking, to challenge the analytical status quo, and when necessary, to highlight the misperceptions and missteps that could undermine

effective policies and strategies. ACR's network of regional experts addressed a broad range of issues, including: national elections (Bangladesh, India), piracy (Somalia and the Straits of Malacca), on-line and lone wolf terrorism, changing violent jihadist strategies, the changing role of women in terrorist organisations, leadership change and nuclear testing in North Korea, the emerging political crisis in Thailand, nuclear smuggling, radicalisation in the Maldives, ethnic conflict and political unrest in Burma, Islamist extremism in Nigeria, the regional implications of NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, the rise of the Arab Spring, social media and political change, and political stability in the Southwest Pacific. The last issue was a special edition entitled "Spotlight on Obama's Reelection and the Pivot to Asia" that included expert insights from Burma, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Australia. The message from across the region was also prescient: that maritime territorial disputes between China and the ASEAN nations will define Asian security for the foreseeable future, that the nations of the region would like to see the United States reassert its influence in the region by developing stronger, mutually beneficial bilateral relationships with regional powers, and that, while welcoming increased US presence as a balance to China's rise, the states in the region do not see the United States as a reliable partner as long as it is preoccupied with the Middle East.

> **The new Asian Conflicts Report remains committed to the ACR's original mission: to present timely and relevant research and analysis on issues related to peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region.**

The new Asian Conflicts Report remains committed to the ACR's original mission: to present timely and relevant research and analysis on issues related to peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region written by both established regional experts and new and emerging scholars, journalists, and analysts from around the world. Our new home with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) untethers the ACR from the constraints of US policy and concerns, enabling us to explore an even broader and more challenging range of issues from a broader range of perspectives. It is our intention to provide a forum not only for new issues, but also for new ideas that challenge the conventional wisdom. Nothing is off the table. It is our hope that the Asian Conflicts Report 2.0 will break new ground, focusing not only on where we have been and where we are, but also on where we are going. In

this spirit, for this inaugural issue, we asked several of our previous authors to provide their insight into the current and emerging implications of the transformation of violent extremism from the old, frankly stodgy al-Qaeda focus on franchised terrorism to a new, dynamic model led by, but certainly not limited to, Islamic State. This new breed of violent extremism focuses not only on terrorism as tool to bring change in the distant future, but also on creating an extremist army capable of capturing and holding territory and establishing a new Islamic caliphate, now. What our experts, from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Singapore, clearly show is that this new, more virulent version of violent extremism has the potential to change the strategic landscape as fundamentally as did al-Qaeda on 11 September 2001, even in countries that, at present, seem relatively free from Islamic State influence.

Caroline F. Ziemke-Dickens, *PhD, is an historian and global security analyst working in Wellington, New Zealand.*

4

UNDERSTANDING THE DANGEROUS "INDIRECT" STRATEGIC THREAT OF ISIS: A SINGAPOREAN PERSPECTIVE

by Kumar Ramakrishna

Summary:

- ISIS represents the evolution and implementation of al-Qaeda's extremist vision in a concrete political and military entity with the capacity and will to capture and hold territory in the Middle East.
- ISIS seeks to avoid military defeat in the Iraq/Syria region, destabilise and ultimately collapse the fragile "near enemies" of the Shia-aligned regimes in Damascus and Baghdad, and erode the political will of the "far enemies" of Western coalition countries to oppose it.
- ISIS has developed a slick and professional social media strategy that has attracted followers around the world and convinced thousands of Muslims – professionals as well as restless youth – to travel to Iraq and Syria to fight for ISIS. The draw is a romanticised vision of a new Islamic caliphate that downplays the violence and sadistic cruelty that has characterised ISIS rule in Iraq and Syria.
- While the defeat of ISIS will necessarily involve a military campaign to force it out of its current strongholds in Iraq and Syria, it will also require an effective soft-power campaign that directly challenges ISIS and its ideology on the battle ground upon which it has been most effective: social media.

The stunning battlefield successes and territorial gains of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) over the past year in the Iraq/Syria region have sent shockwaves around the world. US-led coalition airstrikes since September 2014 have slowed the ISIS advance somewhat. Still, the essential resilience of the organisation in the face of military setbacks was revealed in May 2015 with the capture of the important Iraqi city of Ramadi and the Syrian city of Palmyra.[1]

The ISIS threat is not confined, moreover, to the conflict zone in the troubled Middle East. Thanks to globalisation and the social media, ISIS has had a serious impact on the security situation in Southeast Asia as well. For instance, the Indonesian National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) in December 2014 reported that 514 Indonesians had joined the fighting in Iraq and Syria, while reports in early 2015 put the number of Malaysians joining ISIS at approximately 40. The Philippines is said to have about 200 recruits joining the organisation, although this figure is disputed. In February 2015, it was reported that 110 Australians had travelled to join ISIS of whom 20 have been killed. There is understandable concern that, just as did a previous generation of Southeast Asian fighters that returned from the Afghan conflict in the 1980s to form al-Qaeda - linked violent Islamist terrorist networks like Jemaah Islamiyah, the new generation of ISIS-trained Southeast Asians might set up a similarly dangerous alumni network.[2]

Such fears are hardly misplaced. In March 2015, the discovery of a home-made "chlorine bomb" – comprising "several bottles and a detonator" – was discovered in the ITC Depok shopping mall in Jakarta, Indonesia, was just one ominous development. While it failed to go off, it was the first time such an attack hadever been attempted in Indonesia, and senior police officials admitted that they had been "surprised" at the discovery. They added that the use of such a device was the "signature of ISIS" – a similar device had been used in a January car bomb attack on Kurdish forces in Iraq - and suggested that returned Indonesian fighters from Syria were likely behind the incident.[3] What is more disconcerting is that, since August 2014, ISIS has run a Malaysian-Indonesian unit called Khatibah Nusantara or the ISIS Malay Archipelago Unit, as well as a Malay-medium academy for the education – and, tellingly, military training - of the children of Malaysian and Indonesian fighters. Significantly, the academy is named after Abdullah Azzam, who had been the key ideological mentor of the late al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, killed by US Navy Seals in May 2011. Moreover, there has been a noticeable surge of Malay and Indonesianlanguage material by ISIS online.[4]

Malaysia has been forced to react to the ISIS challenge. In April 2015 it was reported that 70 Malaysian army personnel had joined ISIS, a particular cause for concern given their operational expertise and access to, weapons and explosives material. As of late April 2015, more than a hundred people had been detained by the

Malaysian police. Of particular worry to law enforcement were several so-called "clean skins" without previous criminal records who were implicated in bomb plots targeting strategic and governmental interests in the Kuala Lumpur vicinity.[5]

This surge in ISIS-related activity has prompted Kuala Lumpur to strengthen its legislative arsenal to cope with the threat. Hence in April 2015, the Malaysian parliament passed the controversial Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), granting the government powers to detain terrorist suspects without trial. Some observers have criticised POTA.[6] The controversy revolves around the fact that the Malaysians had repealed similar legislation in the form of the long-running and powerful Internal Security Act just three years earlier. Nevertheless a senior Malaysian police official argued that stronger preventive legislation like POTA was needed to deal with ISIS. While intelligence per se was adequate, this could not always be turned into procedural evidence because witnesses did not always wish to testify in open court.[7]

In the Philippines, concern centres on the peace process in the south. Experts warn that failure to sign the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law underpinning anautonomous Bangsamoro province – which would end the decades-long insurgency by Muslim separatists in the southern resource-rich island of Mindanao – could result in more disgruntled Moro militants willing to nail their colours to the ISIS mast.[8]

Singapore has not been spared from the ISIS threat. While, as of March 2015, only two Singaporean families have been confirmed to be "involved" in Syria, the government is taking no chances. There is much concern over religiously illinformed, self-radicalised young Muslim Singaporeans falling prey to the slick social media propaganda of ISIS.[9]

Understanding ISIS and its Game Plan

What drives ISIS? There have been attempts to make sense of the organisation, but what seems relatively apparent is that ISIS seeks to create a geographically demarcated Islamic political entity that is potentially expansionist. The proclamation of the Islamic Caliphate by the self-proclaimed Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at the end of June 2014 was a strategic move. ISIS propagandists drew on religious apocalyptic imagery to broadcast to Muslims worldwide that, with God's support, ISIS would usher in the "end times", which would bring the final victory of Islam over its enemies. ISIS's leadership is hierarchical, although lower-level commanders apparently possess leeway in conducting local operations in line with ground-level realities. To be sure, ISIS comprises an unusual admixture of ideology and operational know-how: hard-line Islamic fundamentalists and disgruntled and radicalised former Baathists officers who once led the Iraqi armed forces under the deposed Saddam Hussein regime.[10]

The ISIS conception of its deity is a fundamentalist one: punitive and supremacist, keen on rigid observance of in-group/out-group boundaries. As a result, fellow Muslims who disagree with ISIS, as well as Shia, Christians and other minorities, are dehumanised as filth to be cleansed rather than parties to a dispute with whom parley is possible. Such an extremist religious paradigm, perversely, provides theological cover for the many thugs – such as the notorious knife-wielding British militant Jihadi John - who have been drawn into the movement and who indulge in rape, mutilation and killing helpless civilians including women and even young children for nothing more than the vilest sadistic pleasure. The ideological- political frame that complements such a rigidly puritanical theological vision is a version of Salafi jihadism, which legitimates the notion that Islam must dominate all comers, by force if need be.

This apocalyptic vision is precisely why ISIS leaders can be fully expected to pursue territorial expansion beyond the Iraq/Syria region. Little wonder that they have sought to expand their influence into Afghanistan,[11] Pakistan,[12] as well as anarchic Libya.[13] Similarly motivated violent Islamist entities such as Boko Haram in eastern Africa[14] and the East Indonesian Mujahidin in Poso, eastern Indonesia have already pledged allegiance to ISIS and its caliphate.[15] We are in short witnessing the transmogrification of global jihadism in the Iraq/Syria conflict zone – a development with potentially serious worldwide implications. In a nutshell, ISIS represents nothing less than an evolutionarily advanced, moreresilient "mutation" of its rapidly fading al-Qaeda forebears.[16]

> This apocalyptic vision is precisely why ISIS leaders can be fully expected to pursue territorial expansion beyond the Iraq/Syria region.

> ISIS represents nothing less than an evolutionarily advanced, noreresilient "mutation" of its rapidly fading al-Qaeda forebears.

The ISIS "Indirect" Strategy Examined

Like al-Qaeda, ISIS does not seek to directly engage and defeat the armed might of its chief enemies: the "Jews and Crusaders" – Israel, the US and their coalition allies - as sketched out in Salafi jihadi narratives. Rather, ISIS has honed the original al-Qaeda "indirect" strategy of aiming at the true centre of gravity of the Western and allied coalition: its largely multicultural publics.[17] The political goal of the ISIS indirect strategy appears to be to consolidate and opportunistically expand its self-proclaimed Islamic caliphate. To this end ISIS wants to avoid military defeat in the Iraq/Syria region, whilst destabilising and ultimately collapsing the fragile "near enemies" of the Shia-aligned regimes in Damascus and Baghdad – and simultaneously eroding the political will of the "far enemies" of Western coalition countries to oppose it. Outside its area of operations in Iraq and Syria, ISIS, in line with an indirect strategy, emphasises primarily non-kinetic means of expanding its power and influence.

While its kinetic means focus on avoiding military defeat in the Iraq/Syria region whilst opportunistically gaining territory where possible, ISIS seems to be investing more thought and effort into employing social media to attract followers worldwide to its religiously-legitimated quest of rebuilding the lost Islamic caliphate. For example, ISIS has 500 to 2000 followers "who tweet extremist messages and update their Facebook pages around the clock". It has been suggested that the "average ISIS-supporting account has about a thousand followers, which gives the group substantial reach".[18] Social media – Twitter, Facebook, Ask.fm etc. – a weapon al-Qaeda never really fully exploited, has truly been a force multiplier for ISIS. It has not only been untrained novice Muslim fighters, but also trained military and law enforcement officers, professionals, administrators, and even entire families, who have been urged to conduct a hijrah (migration) to the caliphate to populate it and build up the "perfect" Islamic society – a message repeated by the putative ISIS Caliph in May 2015.[19]

> **The skilful and highly professionalised ISIS social media propaganda campaign has had profound impact even in generally moderate Muslim societies like Malaysia and Indonesia.**

The skilful and highly professionalised ISIS social media propaganda campaign has had profound impact even in generally moderate Muslim societies like Malaysia and Indonesia. Meanwhile, another important element of the ISIS indirect approach has been to promote "crowd-sourced"[20] lone wolf or "wolf pack"[21] terrorism by self-radicalised supporters in Western and allied countries. This has a twofold effect: to internally destabilise target communities, and to sow discord between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in multi-cultural societies. In this way, ISIS hopes to foster an insalubrious milieu for the ISIS ideological virus to take hold and metastasise. The December 2014 Sydney hostage-taking incident demonstrated the ISIS crowd-sourced terror tactic all too well,[22] and Malaysian authorities have recently warned of potential lone wolf attacks as well.[23]

Assessment

Southeast Asian countries with significant Muslim populations face a serious challenge from the latest mutation of the al-Qaeda "superorganism" known as ISIS. While "hard" law enforcement approaches – such as imposing severe legal penalties for facilitating the travel of individuals or travelling oneself to fight with ISIS – as well as intelligence exchange within and between governments on ISIS logistics, funding and recruitment patterns in the region remain crucial, they will not be sufficient.

ISIS is selling an idea of the restored Islamic Caliphate that appears to have tremendous symbolic and emotional appeal to conservative Muslims in Southeast Asia and around the world. Hence "soft" measures need to be part of a counter-strategy. Improved governance in predominantly Muslim areas, particularly in hotspots like Poso and Mindanao, are important. It is the social media war of ideas and perceptions, however, which is most critical. The war of ideas must include counter-ideological campaigns aimed at vulnerable Southeast Asian constituencies and promulgated by a judicious and nationally customised mix of suitable interlocutors - such as progressive Muslim scholars and "formers" - with a view to fighting the stock ISIS message. This strategy should include full and ruthless exploitation of the myriad ways the high rhetoric and credibility of the ISIS leadership has been repeatedly contradicted by the vile deeds of many of their sadistic followers.

Ultimately, though, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the eschatologically symbolic territorial base of ISIS itself in the Iraq/Syria region must be destroyed. This objective has to be undertaken by a yet another geopolitically and religiously balanced and militarily effective coalition of the willing. Former US Defence Secretary Robert Gates has criticised the Obama Administration

for its "day-by-day" approach to the ISIS threat in Syria and Iraq and claims that "we don't really have a strategy at all".[24] Unless the sustained political will can be found to construct such a coalition for winning not just the war but crucially the peace afterward - the serious threat posed to global security by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria will likely persist and even worsen.

Kumar Ramakrishna *is Head of Policy Studies in the Office of the Executive Deputy Chairman at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He is the author of Islamist Terrorism and Militancy in Indonesia: The Power of the Manichean Mindset (Singapore: Springer, 2015).*

5
CONTESTING THE SPACE AND CHALLENGING THE TERRORIST NARRATIVE

by Thomas Koruth Samuel

Summary:

- Governments, religious organisations, and civil society all have a stake in preventing the spread of the poisonous ideologies of terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State. All interested parties must commit to developing effective ways of challenging the terrorist narrative and creating a powerful counter-narrative, failing which, terrorists will continue to expand their influence.
- Terrorist propaganda has been enormously effective because it presents a clearly stated narrative based on straightforward assumptions, appealing to those looking for simple answers to complex questions.
- An effective counter-narrative must directly confront the terrorist narrative by demonstrating that violence is an ineffective strategy; that terrorists are aware of the disconnect between their actions and the accomplishment of their stated goals; and that terrorists continue their violent course in pursuit of an agenda that has little to do with defending Muslims and alleviating their suffering, and, in fact, has caused tremendous harm and misery to the very people they claim to be fighting for.
- An effective counter-narrative strategy should also reassess our actions to honestly address the extent to which the grievances underlying the terrorist narrative might have some basis in fact.

The need to contest the narrative space:

Since early 2014, the march of the Islamic State has been seemingly relentless. According to Aljazeera[25], in March 2015, they captured Basra, in the Deraa province in Syria. In April, they managed to capture and control most of Yarmouk, which is 8 km away from the centre of Damascus. In mid-May, they were said to be in control of 95,000 square kilometres of land, or almost half of Syria. In Iraq, in mid-May, it was reported that they captured the Iraqi city of Ramadi. Indeed, as we near the first anniversary of Islamic State's declaration of itself as a caliphate, Charlie Winter of the Quilliam Foundation raised the question that Islamic State supporters have been actively posting over the social media, "Last year it was Mosul, this year it's Ramadi, and where will it be next year?'[26]

Islamic State's impressive material gains are founded upon something far more insidious and dangerous: their systematic and sustained ability to win the 'hearts and the minds' of people, especially the youth, not only in their area of operations but around the world. Given this, Governments, religious organisations, and civil society all have a stake in preventing the spread of the poisonous ideologies of Islamic State and other violent extremist organisations. Until and unless all interested parties commit to developing effective ways of addressing this challenge and mounting effective counter efforts, the Islamic State will continue to expand its influence.

> Governments, religious organisations, and civil society all have a stake in preventing the spread of the poisonous ideologies of Islamic State and other violent extremist organisations.

President Obama, in his address to the United Nations in September 2014, spoke of the need to 'contest the space that terrorists occupy'. He went on to further elaborate that the narratives and ideologies of groups such as Islamic State, al-Qaeda, and Boko Haram would 'wilt and die' if they were 'consistently exposed and confronted and refuted'.[27]

How, in practical terms, do we confront and subsequently contest the 'space' that terrorists occupy?

We start by acknowledging that this is a serious problem. In May 2015, Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations Secretary-General, warned that the flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) to Islamic State and other extremist groups had increased alarmingly: 15,000 fighters from 80 countries in November 2014 to 25,000 fighters from 100 countries in mid-2015. This translates to a staggering 70% increase.[28]

This increase may also indicate that the contestation for the spaces that these terrorists occupy at the psychological and ideological level will also become increasingly challenging. Make no mistake: delegitimising an already entrenched idea and challenging the status-quo (for in such radical circles, fighting in Syria and Iraq is seen as

the accepted norm) will be extremely daunting. It will involve comprehensive efforts in addressing the issues the terrorist ideologies raise by providing workable, sustainable and practical alternatives. Nevertheless it must be done, if we are to see credible progress in defeating the terrorists in general and countering their narrative in particular.

What are they saying and why does it work?

Schmid and de Graaf argue convincingly that while terrorism in the past was only seen through the lenses of political violence, there is now a need for it to be understood in the context of ' communication and propaganda'. They posit that terrorism is a 'combination of both violence and propaganda' to 'advertise' and convince others of the group's potential to cause 'harm and to destroy.'[29] This propaganda is then communicated as the basis of the terrorist narrative.

What is the story line that terrorists, including the Islamic State are advancing to attract, engage, radicalise and subsequently recruit people? The rhetorical arc of the terrorist narrative comprises a simple three-step progression:

I. There are injustices occurring in many parts of the world;
II. There is a need to act; and
III. Violence is the only possible response.[30]

These straightforward assumptions appeal to those looking for simple answers to complex questions. They have the added advantage of being partially true. Numerous innocent people all around the world have, in fact, suffered as a result of acts of injustice, cruelty and discrimination simply because of their race, religion or creed.

In this context, terrorist propaganda throws down the gauntlet in the form of two questions:
• After seeing and witnessing all that is happening (suffering, humiliation and cruelty against targeted groups), can you choose to do nothing?
• What will your response be to this tragedy?

Harry Setyo R.,[31] a former terrorist in Indonesia, relates, based on his own experience, how terrorist recruiters draw potential recruits' attention to the plight of suffering Muslims, and subsequently question them on their response to such tragedies. Marhmudi Hariano alias Yusuf highlights how as a young man, after exposure to such terrorist rhetoric, he felt compelled to defend his fellow Muslims around the world from the suffering to which they were exposed.[32] Sidney

Jones reiterates that, in the Indonesian case, the premise that 'this is the way that you can actively help your fellow Muslims' functions as a strong and effective recruiting strategy for the terrorists.[33]

The importance of this extremist narrative has led Frank Ciluffo to conclude that, "We've been fighting the wrong battle. The real centre of gravity of the enemy is their narrative".[34]

The Counter-Narrative: Debunk and Negate

Sir David Omand, the former director of Britain's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), noted in 2005 that "[we] badly need a counter-narrative that will help groups exposed to the terrorist message make sense of what they are seeing around them".[35]

Given the growing focus on challenging Islamic State's increasingly effective extremist narrative, what then are the issues that we need to consider when formulating a counter-narrative?

Debunking and negating go to the core of contesting the terrorist arguments, rhetoric and propaganda. Strategies to debunk and negate should, first, highlight the questionable achievements of the terrorists in terms of their own objectives: What have they done? What have they achieved? And do their ends really justify their violent means? This can be done in three steps.

First, it is important to identify the terrorist groups' stated political or religious agenda, such as liberating people or groups from oppression by foreign invaders or illegitimate regimes, establishing a religiously-based regime, ending discrimination, or establishing justice and equality.

Second, an effective counter-narrative should compare these objectives with the actions the terrorist groups have taken to achieve them: indiscriminate bombings, beheadings of prisoners, and killing of civilians through suicide attacks, to name a few.

Third, an effective counter-narrative should analyze the extent to which the terrorists' actions have indeed helped them achieve their objectives and defend the vulnerable populations they claim to represent. Alex Schmid notes that, in al-Qaeda's case, the 'actual record of behaviour is very much vulnerable when their lofty professions are measured against their actual performances.'[36] Indeed, there is hard evidence that suggests that more than 80% of the victims of al-Qaeda have been Muslims.[37] Islamic State's record of killing

fellow Muslims is almost certainly even worse. As a result, in part, of this disconnect, extremist groups like al-Qaeda and Islamic State are often rejected by the very Muslims they claim to be fighting for.[38] This needs to be highlighted.

At a minimum, such direct confrontation of the terrorist narrative demonstrates that the violence perpetrated by terrorists constitutes a tactically inferior and ineffective strategy. More importantly, however, it shows that, terrorists are actually aware of the disconnect between their actions and the accomplishment of their stated goals but continue their violent course in pursuit of their own vested, but unstated interests. This hidden agenda has little to do with defending Muslims and alleviating their suffering, and, in fact, has caused tremendous harm and misery to the very people they claim to be fighting for.

> This hidden agenda has little to do with defending Muslims and alleviating their suffering, and, in fact, has caused tremendous harm and misery to the very people they claim to be fighting for.

That said, an effective counter-narrative strategy should also reassess our actions to honestly address the extent to which the grievances underlying the terrorist narrative might have some basis in fact. We need to entertain the possibility that at times our actions have created grievances upon which terrorists have capitalised in advancing their self-serving agenda of indiscriminate violence.

The Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS), in its report entitled *Countering Violent Extremism: The Counter Narrative Study*, pointed to the need for 'dealing with local and regional issues' as 'the starting point for countering the narratives of violence.[39] These local and regional issues often stem from double standards between what we say and what we actually do. It is absolutely vital that, in confronting the terrorist narrative, we close the 'say-do' gap.[40] As Ralph Waldo Emerson succinctly put it, 'What you do speaks so loudly, that I cannot hear what you say.'

Conclusion

Hillary R. Clinton, the former American Foreign Secretary, candidly noted in 2011 during a Senate Testimony, that "we are in an information war, and we are losing".[41] Until and unless we rethink our strategy on countering the narrative of the terrorists, we may not only lose the information war, but the war itself.

Thomas Koruth Samuel *is Director of the Research and Publication Division in the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.*

6
DAESH AND THE PHILIPPINES: DISTANT BUT VIRULENT INSPIRATION

by Charithie Joaquin

Summary:

- At the international level, concern is widespread that if even a small fraction of the estimated 30,000 to 50,000 foreign recruits currently fighting with Islamic State return home as trained and indoctrinated guerrilla fighters, they could unleash a new era of widespread extremist violence.
- While The Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in the Southern Philippines have pledged allegiance to Islamic State, meaningful operational and ideological links appear to be weak or non-existent.
- The Philippine government's strategy seeks to isolate the ASG and BIFF from the global terrorism narratives and networks, focusing instead on their detrimental role as "spoilers" in internal peace process between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).
- Even in the predominantly Muslim South, the Philippine culture, with its emphasis on strong and close family ties makes the prospect of fighting and dying for a distant Islamic caliphate unappealing.
- The appeal of Daesh's call to arms may further degrade as the peace process with the MILF advances towards favourable outcomes.

Introduction

The violent extremist group Daesh, better known as Islamic State, has caused alarm and panic around the world. According to Filipino terrorism expert, Rommel Banlaoi, it has become the "most violent extremist jihadist armed group". Armed groups in the Philippines, namely, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), have released short videos declaring that they pledge allegiance to Daesh.

Variously known as Daesh (or al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham), the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), the group has most recently re-branded itself as Islamic State (IS) to reflect its conquest and control of territories in Iraq and Syria. US President Barack Obama countered that "ISIL is not Islamic . . . and [is] certainly not a state." Other governments, such as those of France and Iraq, prefer the term Daesh, the acronym of the group's Arabic name, which also mean "to trample down and crush".

In the Philippines, the group is commonly known as ISIS or IS – the names used by international and local media. While there is widespread consensus that Islamic State is a potential threat to regional and global security and stability, it remains something of an enigma in the minds of Filipinos. Main sources of information on Daesh are the media and government. Television and radio are the most accessible media as access to information through online sources and social media is limited, especially among poor Muslim communities in Maguindanao, Sulu, and Balisan in the Southern Philippines.

How real is the threat posed by Daesh to the Philippines? What is the connection between Daesh and local groups such as the ASG and the BIFF? What counter measures are being undertaken to limit the influence of Daesh?

Daesh as a Potential Threat

Though Daesh traces its roots from al-Qaeda and fighters from Afghanistan, it differs from al-Qaeda in some fundamental ways. Unlike al-Qaeda, Daesh seeks to capture and hold territory and maintain a strong standing army. Its scope of operations is directed, for now, exclusively to the Middle East. While al-Qaeda claimed ideological sovereignty over the Muslim umma – inspiring lone wolf terrorists and planting sleeper cells to attack the far enemy in the West – Islamic State boasts of carving out a caliphate – the ideal Islamic state – in territories captured from the near enemies, corrupt regimes in Iraq and Syria. The rise of Islamic State has inspired a handful of lone-wolf attacks in the West. But its real success has come through its ability to entice thousands of foreign fighters, mostly young men (but also young women), to travel to Iraq and Syria to fight for the

As terrorism expert Dr Daniel Byman puts it: al-Qaeda is like the "boring father" while Daesh is the "cool", exciting son.

caliphate. As terrorism expert Dr Daniel Byman puts it: al-Qaeda is like the "boring father" while Daesh is the "cool", exciting son.

Daesh reportedly has between 30,000 to 50,000 fighters in Syria and Iraq with 20,000 from the Arab world. How much threat do returning foreign fighters pose to their communities when they finally return home? Will they, like the mujahideen who returned from Afghanistan in the 1990s, sow the seeds of a new age of violent ideological extremism?

While Daesh propaganda videos romanticise the experience of joining the fight in Iraq and Syria, the reality that most volunteers face is very different. Many volunteers are neither militarily equipped nor properly trained to pursue their dream of slaughtering as many enemies as possible. Others are relegated to support roles, churning the propaganda machine and providing logistical support for fighters and fresh recruits. Some return bitter, having failed to find much glory in the "Islamic State". They discover that there is no "Caliphate", but only small and constantly shifting pockets of territory temporarily controlled by Daesh. Some volunteers, especially women, are sold as slaves and women are abused in most unfortunate ways and some have publically acknowledged their mistake and expressed the desire to return home.

These foreign fighters have the potential to spread Daesh tactics such as beheading and kidnapping. In places like the Philippines, they have the theoretical potential to change the configuration of civil wars or internal conflicts.

Yet, a few foreign fighters return battle-tested, highly skilled and radicalised. Some are embraced as "heroes" by their communities. When they return, they may join existing groups, thereby further radicalising them; or they may create a new radical group. In either case, these foreign fighters have the potential to spread Daesh tactics such as beheading and kidnapping. In places like the Philippines, they have the theoretical potential to change the configuration of civil wars or internal conflicts.

A Distant But Virulent Inspiration
In April 2015, General Gregorio Catapang, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), maintained that no returning Daesh militants were operating in the country. He further warned that those who fight against peace "will be isolated . . . will be become useless, irrelevant and they will lose in this fight". But this does not mean that Islamic State, and its ideology, do not present a challenge to Philippine security.

President Benigno Aquino III, speaking to foreign media during his state visit to Germany in September 2014, explained the likely nature of the connection of Daesh to ASG and the BIFF, stating that:

"The Philippines still faces the same problems: terrorist groups like the Abu Sayyaf and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters which are doing basically the same things, but now attributing it to their joining IS, which doesn't necessarily mean that they are IS."

President Aquino's statement underscores the government's nuanced threat assessment, which seeks to disentangle the ASG and BIFF from the global terrorism narratives and networks. This is significant especially within the context of the on-going peace process between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MILF has disowned the BIFF, once part of its military arm. Both the ASG and the BIFF are considered spoilers in the peace process. There have been allegations that they are harboring terrorists.

In January 2015, a violent clash between the Special Action Forces (SAF) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and elements of the MILF and BIFF ensued in Tukanalipao, Mamasapano, Maguindanao, MILF-controlled areas. The operation was intended for SAF to serve warrants of arrest to high-ranking terrorists, Malaysian Zulkifli Abdhir aka Marwan and Ahmad Akmad Usman aka Abdul Bassit Usman. It resulted to the death of 44 SAF officers, about 23 from the MILF and BIFF, and several civilians. The incident elicited strong public opinion against the GRP-MILF peace process especially because the MILF was perceived as insincere and harboring terrorists.

Marwan, one of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) most wanted terrorists, was shot inside a nipa hut and confirmed dead by the FBI after examination of his DNA. A bomb expert, he was the leader of the Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, part of the central command of Jemaah Islamiya (JI), and co-founder of the Khalifa Islamiya Mindanao.

Abdul Bassit Usman also a bomb making expert was head of BIFF's Special operations Group and had alleged links with ASG and JI. In May 2014, he was killed in a chance encounter with the MILF in

Maguindanao. Many experts view this as an effort on the part of the MILF to show sincerity and boost the peace process. But the concern is growing that Daesh ideology is gaining influence among some Philippine Muslims in a way that could destabilise a delicate peace process.

Since May 2014, videos have been circulating in social media of men speaking in local dialect, Filipino, and Arabic declaring support and loyalty to Daesh and its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The individuals' faces are usually hidden and a black flag is used as backdrop. One of the videos shows ASG senior leader Isnilon Hapilon pledging bay-ah to Baghdadi promising to "obey him on anything which our hearts desire or not and to value him more than anyone else". The BIFF has also declared allegiance to Daesh.

There have been other disturbing events. In July 2014, Australian-born Musa Cerantonio, a Christian convert to Islam who has been using social media to encourage terrorism and urge Muslims to join the jihad in Syria and Iraq, was captured in Cebu, in Southern Philippines. Cerantonio has been identified by terrorism experts, as one of the world's leading cheerleaders for Islamic State.

In October 2014, there were reports of Daesh members in Zamboanga City recruiting students to fight for Islamic State for two months with the promise of Php70,000.00 as a joining bonus. Recently, the military has confirmed reports that five Malaysian fighters had penetrated Mindanao and are now fighting with the ASG. What remains unconfirmed is if these foreign fighters are affiliated with Daesh.

Given the pressure it is under from local rebels, combined with the relative lack of Daesh influence in the country, the prospect of the Philippines sending support to the US campaign against Daesh is slight, despite the earlier government declaration of support.

Counter Measures

While both the ASG and BIFF have openly pledged allegiance to the Daesh, it remains uncertain whether they are receiving funds from the terrorist group. Apart from one unverified report, no Filipinos are known to have joined Daesh's fight in the Middle East. Why not?

Daesh uses an attractive recruitment process and offers potential recruits rosy prospects. Its expert use of social media has exponentially enlarged its reach. ASG and BIFF, in contrast, have limited online presence and, thus, lack Daesh's glitzy propaganda machine. They have not released any materials espousing, clarifying or enticing others to support Daesh's ideologies and do not promote Daesh in any meaningful way.

Though Daesh's videos may be accessible in the Philippines, the invitation to join Daesh and become a suicide bomber is likely to fall on deaf ears. Thus far, there have been no cases of suicide bombers in the Philippines. Perhaps because the Filipinos are known to be among of the world's happiest people, with a culture of strong and close family ties, the prospect of sacrificing oneself in the name of a distant Islamic Caliphate may hold little appeal.

The strong ties between ASG and BIFF, which maintain a tactical alliance in pursuit of mutually beneficial goals, may also undermine the recruitment efforts of Daesh. The two groups have common members and share use of training facilities and experts.

ASG has long been considered a bandit group, largely devoid of any ideological moorings. It is known more for its penchant for criminal schemes such as kidnapping for ransom, beheading and extortion than for any Islamist ideological purity. ASG's bai-yah to Baghdadi may be its tactic of aligning itself with the latest "cool" kid in the block to be seen as virulent to earn "pogi points". "Pogi" is a colloquial term that translates to "good looks". It attempts to reclaim public attention to be able to attract fresh recruits and generate financial support.

The Philippine government strategy may also be a factor. The government has taken care to isolate these local armed groups and decimate or totally neutralise them. Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said that the military is continuously tracking down the armed bandits. The ASG and the BIFF have been the target of an all-out offensive by the AFP in Maguindanao. The military has confirmed reports that 36 ASG rebels had been killed and 78 wounded in the period January to March 2015.

The Southern Philippines, where the majority of the country's Muslim population is located, includes most of the country's poorest provinces. The population, for the most part, lacks access to basic services like health and education. There is no equitable access to resources. Social mobility is difficult, and the perception of the relative deprivation of the people in the region is further sharpened in the light improving access to

information. International borders in the region are porous and largely uncontrolled. Access to illicit firearms trafficking is widespread and private armed groups proliferate, especially in the areas of Maguindanao, Sulu and Basilan.

But the Philippine government has recognised that military solutions have their limitations. The Philippine military may decimate the known ASG and BIFF members, but if legitimate underlying grievances are not addressed, the violent extremist ideology of Daesh, or any similar group, may inspire radical movements in the Philippines.

Of particular concern is the growing number of teenagers between the ages of 14 and 17 joining ASG with the potential of becoming more radical and fundamental as they mature. Exposed to virulent ideas, indoctrinated in the extremist tradition of returning Afghan fighters, and trained in guerrilla warfare, the upcoming generation of young Philippine Muslims have the potential to transform into "real mujahideen" if the region's legitimate grievances are not addressed.

In what is fast becoming a war of attrition, Daesh desperately needs warm bodies to join its fight in Iraq and Syria. Its propaganda campaign aims to recruit volunteers to travel to the Middle East to become suicide bombers and cannon fodder to help sell its ideology. At present, these are not prospects that appeal to Filipino Muslims, even for ASG and BIFF members. The appeal of Daesh's call to arms may be even less appealing as the peace process with the MILF advances towards favourable outcomes. There is optimism that with the creation of a Bangsamoro autonomous region, the legitimate grievances that fuel violent extremism will be addressed, perhaps undermining Daesh's presence and influence in the region once and for all.

***Prof Charithie Joaquin** is Chief of the Academic Affairs Division at the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP).*

7
INDONESIA'S RESPONSES TO ISLAMIC STATE

by Dina Afrianty

Summary:

- A clear consensus has emerged among Indonesia's government, Muslim organizations, and public opinion rejecting the Islamic State, its agenda, and the brutality of its campaign to establish an Islamic caliphate in Syria and Iraq.
- Seeing the initial government response as weak,Muslim organizations took the lead in urging the government to prevent Indonesians from traveling to Iraq and Syria to fight with Islamic State, and to ban those currently there from returning to Indonesia to avoid a repeat of Indonesia's experience with returning "Afghan jihadis" through the 1990s and early 2000s – culminating in the 2002 Bali bombing.
- President Joko Widodo has, since taking office in October 2014, announced a number of steps to prevent Islamic State ideology from taking root in Indonesia, including travel bans to and from Syria and Iraq, monitoring of Indonesians living and traveling elsewhere in the Middle East, and revision of Indonesia's prison deradicalization programs.
- Steps in recent years to incorporate conservative religious parties into the political mainstream and the ensuing increase in public piety have largely robbed advocates of Islamic State's radical agenda of a recruiting base and paved the way for a strong, anti-Islamic State consensus.

The anti-Islamic State Consensus

With local and international media continuing to report on the violence and brutality of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) – including killing both Muslims and non-Muslims and destroying Islamic historical sites including the tomb of the Prophet Jonah – Indonesian Muslims have rejected the call made by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, for Muslims to join the war to create an Islamic caliphate.

This rejection of IS spans government policy and the spontaneous response of individuals and, importantly includes a wide range of Muslim organisations. Indonesians have posted their anger and condemnation of acts of brutality on social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Banners and flyers posted in public spaces in villages and towns across Indonesia also repudiate Islamic State and its agenda: 'Tolak ISIS – NKRI Harga Mati' or 'Reject ISIS, The Unitary Republic of Indonesia is the price of death', and, 'NKRI YES, ISIS No' or 'Yes to the Unitary Republic of Indonesia, No to ISIS'.

While likely Government-sponsored, these banners send a clear message reminding Indonesians not to be deceived by Islamic State's appeal for the creation of an Islamic caliphate. Indonesian authorities are playing the nationalism card, effectively arguing that support for IS will threaten national unity. Indonesian authorities have repeatedly warned that the ISIS agenda is not in line with Indonesia's national Pancasila ideology and presents a threat to Indonesia's cultural and religious diversity. (Berger 2014: Perdani and Ina, 5 August 2014)

Muslim Civil Society Leads the Way

This unity between the state and key Muslim civil society organisations regarding the threat posed by Islamic State appears to have emerged only following the declaration of the caliphate in mid 2014, and the release of a video of an Indonesian jihadi calling for fellow

> The Indonesian government was previously seen as being too soft.

Indonesian Muslims to join ISIS. The Indonesian government was previously seen as being too soft.

As Berger (2014) put it, the Indonesian government showed little interest in responding to the threat ISIS posed to a peaceful Indonesian Islam during the first half of 2014. ISIS flags appeared among other Islamic religious symbols at pre-electionpublic rallies in the major street close to the Presidential Palace in Jakarta. Groups allegedly sympathetic to Islamic State organized a number of religious gatherings around Indonesia allegedly. For example, a group calling itself the Islamic Sharia Activists Forum (FAKSI) organised a public gathering to show support to ISIL at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) campus mosque in the outskirts of Jakarta. (Perdani, 8 August 2014) The event triggered immediate public outcry when it was reported that this group used the event to take an oath and pledge loyalty to IS. (Trisna, 7 August 2014) The Muslim public opinion condemned athorities for allowing the event to take place at the State Islamic University, known as a center of moderate Islam, and demanded a crackdown on FAKSI. The State

Islamic University's administration subsequently stated that it would not let the campus be used for radical teachings or the promulgation of IS ideology. (Perdani, 8 August 2014) Moderate Indonesian Muslims also questioned the government's commitment to standing up against the spread of ISIL radical influence when the Police, under pressure from some Indonesian Islamists, laid charges of blasphemy against the Editor of the English Newspaper, the Jakarta Post, following publication of a cartoon depicting ISIS militants executing prisoners on 3 July 2014. The Islamists perceived the cartoon, which was intended to criticize Islamic State's the use of Islamic symbols in the violent and brutal execution of IS prisoners, as insulting to Islam.

Abu Bakar Baasyir, the former leader of Jemaah Islamiyah who is currently in prison for involvement in the Bali Bombings, has declared his allegiance to ISIS.

These incidents demonstrate that some Indonesian Islamists believe ISIS is fighting for a legitimate Islamic cause, and is, thus, worthy of support. Abu Bakar Baasyir, the former leader of Jemaah Islamiyah who is currently in prison for involvement in the Bali Bombings, has declared his allegiance to ISIS. The response to IS has been far from uniform, even among Indonesian Islamic radicals. Baasyir's own group, JI, has split over his pledge to IS. One detrimental effect of this split within Islamist ranks is that he links and lines of communication between radicalized individuals/groups and potential Islamic State recruiters are likely to remain murky. This lack of clarity as to radical loyalties could actually complicate the law enforcement effort as compared to the response during the early 2000s.

The Government Response

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono condemned IS in August 2014, following the release of a video showing ISIL militants beheading US Reporter James Foley in August 2014, charging that what ISIL has done to Islam is an embarrassment. (France-Presse, 21 August 2014) At the same time, Commander of the Armed Forces, General Moeldoko announced that his office would work with the pesantren community to reintroduce pancasila into the pesantren curricula. (Berger 2014)

Indonesia's new President, Joko Widodo, has taken more concrete action against ISIS campaigns to recruit Indonesians to join the conflict overseas. Upon coming to office in October 2014, President Widodo declared that his government will prevent Indonesians from travelling to Syria or Iraq. He has subsequently announced plans to monitor the movements of Indonesian citizens living in the Middle East and reinvent the prison deradicalisation program for convicted terrorists. Lastly, the government has expressed its commitment to working with traditional Islamic educational institutions – pesantren and madrasah – as well as religious leaders and Muslim organizations to promote a tolerant and moderate Islam.

The Indonesian government also recently announced that it will revoke the passports of Indonesians who have travelled to Syria and Iraq and prevent their return to Indonesia. (The Jakarta Post, 16 January 2015) Tedjo Edhy Purdjanto, Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, announced that 'We (the Government) will revoke the passports of those who plan to go abroad to join ISIS and those who are already abroad with ISIS. They cannot be allowed to come home'. (The Jakarta Post, 16 January 2015) In the government's view, allowing foreign fighters to return to Indonesia would give them the opportunity to influence other Indonesian Muslims and inspire them to violent, radical and extremist acts in a tragic replay of Indonesia's experience with fighters returning from the conflict in Afghanistan in the early 1990s. Many of these returnees contributed directly to the rise of violent extremism and numerous terrorist acts in Indonesia, including the 2002 Bali bombing.

A range of Muslim organisations have strongly supported the government's position on IS. The Indonesian Government applauded a statement made by the National Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia or MUI) in August 2014 that ISIL is a violent and radical movement that has tarnished the image of peaceful Islam and that its movement clearly stands against Islam. In an official statement, the Chairman of MUI, Professor Din Syamsuddin called upon 'Islamic organisations to step up their vigilance and to guard against ISIL efforts to use them'. (Perdani, 8 August 2014) The MUI demanded that the government ban ISIS ideology to prevent its influencing Indonesian Muslims. The Ulama Council also declared the ISIS radical campaign to create an Islamic ummah as counter to Pancasila and, thus, a threat to the unity of the Republic. As in other areas of public policy (such as blasphemy) there is little separation between MUI and Government policy.

The two largest Muslim-based civil society organisations - Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama – issued similar characterizations of the

threat from Islamic State ideology. Kyai Hasyim Muzadi, former Chairman of the Nahdhatul Ulama, the largest Muslim Based Organisation (MBO), condemned ISIL as un-Islamic and warned Indonesian Muslims against its promotion of violence, adding that its campaign to promote Islam was not appropriate to the situation in Indonesia. He said 'ISIS is a new phenomenon in the Middle East, which is by no means appropriate to Indonesian conditions'. (The Jakarta Post, 4 August 2014) He then warned the government that the infiltration of radical ideology has been made easier since the reform era with the establishment of various new Muslim organisations.

Political Reform and the anti-Islamic State Consensus

This general consensus between Government, Muslim public opinion, and the major Muslim organisations regarding the influence of Islamic State marks a major departure from Indonesia's earlier responses to extremism. This may, in part, be the result of Indonesian political reforms in recent years. Radical groups such as Laskar Jihad, Jamaah Islamiyah, Majelis Mujahidin, and The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) have been effective in gaining wider support under Indonesia's democratisation. These groups are often reported as endorsing violent means of protecting and promoting Islam. However, as conservative Islamic political parties have become an influential voice in Indonesian politics, those radical groups operating outside the system seem to have less currency. The injection of religious agendas into the political sphere has undermined support for extremism and, therefore, narrowed the space for radical voices.

As conservative Islamic political parties have become an influential voice in Indonesian politics, those radical groups operating outside the system seem to have less currency.

Indonesia's anti-Islamic State consensus also reflects the particular character of the IS agenda and the challenge it poses to existing state structures. Indonesian democracy has been strongly coloured in recent years by the need to respond to public demands for recognition of Indonesia's Islamic identity. This has included political support for various legal and regulatory measures (such as regional syari'ah regulations and national measures such as an anti-pornography law) and an obvious flourishing in public piety including growth in the prevalence of Muslim attire and Islamic print media. Some elements of Indonesian civil society have expressed concern over what they see as an increasing Islamic conservatism in public policy and growing influence of an alliance of conservative and radical organisations. While the Government has always maintained vigilance against the threat of Islamic terrorism, inspired at least in part by a historical fear of secessionist threats, the threat represented by IS clearly marks a development beyond any previous experiences with radicalism and extremism. It seems, also, to be forging an unprecedented consensus among the diverse players in the Indonesian political landscape.

Dr Dina Afrianty *is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Institute for Religion, Politics, and Society (IRPS) at Australian Catholic University in Melbourne. She is affiliated with the nternational Relations Department at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta.*

References:

Pernadi, Y and Ina P 2014 'Government bans support, endorsement of ISIL', The Jakarta Post, 5 August 2014, retrieved on 20 May 2015 from *<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/08/05/govt-bans-support-endorsement-isil.html#sthash.lYIW71Jw.dpuf>*

Trisna, N 2014, 'Ada deklarasi ISIS di kampus, UIN Jakarta: Kami kecolongan', Liputan 6, 7 August 2014, retrieved on 20 May 2015 from http://news.liputan6.com/read/2087644/ada-deklarasi-isis-di-kampus-uin-jakarta-kami-kecolongan

Berger, D 2014, 'Why Indonesia banned ISIS', New Mandala, 1 October 2014, retrieved 18 May 2015 from *< http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2014/10/01/why-indonesia-banned-isis/>*

Perdani Y 2014, 'MUI Joins nationwide campaign against ISIL', The Jakarta Post, 8 August 2014, retrieved 18 May 2015 from *<: http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/08/08/mui-joins-nationwide-campaign-against-isil.html#sthash.KrLEBz4T.dpuf>*

France-Presse, A 2014, 'Indonesia President says Islamic State 'embarrassing' Muslims', The Jakarta Post, 21 August 2014, retrieved on 17 May 2015 from *<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/08/21/indonesia-president-says-islamic-state-embarrassing-muslims.html#sthash.dtq1TjqL.dpuf>*

The Jakarta Post 2014, 'Scholar warns Muslims of ISIS influence in Indonesia', 4 August 2014, retrieved 18 May 2015 from *< http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/08/04/scholar-warns-muslims-isis-influence-indonesia.html#sthash.SamEf7q0.dpuf>*

8
ADVENT OF THE IS: A PERSPECTIVE FROM PAKISTAN

Dr. Khuram Iqbal

Summary:
- Islamic State is building a network of allies and supporters in Pakistan, but tension between IS and the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan has, so far, limited its extent.
- Indian government efforts to play IS infiltration of Pakistan to their advantage may backfire. IS ambitions to expand its influence into South Asia has the potential to destabilise Indian-held Kashmir. Kashmir-centric groups are under in creasing pressure to resume attacks in Indian-held Kashmir in order to protect their exclusive sphere of influence from IS encroachment.
- Alliance with IS offers local jihadis an opportunity for "rebranding" to appear strong and relevant.

A threat assessment using the "Adversarial Analysis" framework confirms satellite presence of the Islamic State (IS) in Pakistan. Adversarial Analysis incorporates a close examination of a group's intentions (gauged through ideological disposition, and past activities), capabilities (measured through quality and quantity of fighters, training facilities, financial status, and weaponry) and opportunities (assessed through vulnerability of the targeted community, overall security environment, and composition of the support base). Application of this framework demonstrates that local threat groups – hitherto operating under the umbrella of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) – seem to be using the IS brand to stay relevant after suffering considerable operational and ideological setbacks as a result of Operation *"Zarb-e-Azb"*:[42] a countrywide military, intelligence and law enforcement campaign aimed at eliminating militants' infrastructure and support network.

Since the IS is still in a formative phase in Pakistan, scholarly work on the subject is scarce. But a number of Pakistani newspaper columnists and counter-terrorism analysts have scaled the level of threat and concur that the group is operating through proxies, although the nature of the operational links have yet to be established.

Amir Rana's informative piece entitled "What ISIS and the 'caliphate' mean for Pakistan"[43] discusses the differences between al-Qaeda and the IS and why Khurasan region (areas comprising Pakistan and Afghanistan) is so important to local, regional, and global jihadi forces. According to various interpretations of Islamic text, before the end of time an Islamic army with black flags would emerge from this region and win the first defeat against non-believers, finally reaching Eela (the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem) where they will raise their flags.[44] The use of black flags by a number of militant organisations operating from this region is, in fact, a well-thought-out decision to seek religious justification for their existence.[45] Rana argues that territorial gains made by the IS are serving as a morale booster for Pakistani jihadi outfits.

Abdul Basit, a researcher associated with the International Centre of Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) in Singapore, has summarised how policy makers and local militant outfits perceive IS in Pakistan.[46] He has classified militant responses to the Middle Eastern terrorist organisation into three broad categories; first, those who have openly denounced IS (al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent and the core Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan); second, those who welcomed the IS with open arms (splinter groups of the TTP such as Jamaatul Ahrar and Jundullah-Pakistan); and, third, those who prefer to "wait and see". Kashmir-centric religious nationalist militant outfits including Lashkar-e-Tayeba and Jaish-e-Muhammad fit in this category.

Saima Khan attributes IS's ingress to infighting and fragmentation within the TTP and anticipates that an ideological link is expected eventually to translate into an operational partnership.[47] Such an alliance, she postulates, can pit the Pakistani Taliban against the Afghan Taliban, who are battling IS in neighbouring Afghanistan. But the key question is: why would Pakistani Taliban opt to dump a near and time-tested ally for a far, unpredictable and discredited ally? Afghan Taliban enjoy more popular support and credibility in Pakistan than IS, which is seen by majority of Pakistanis as tyrannical and whose violence is mainly directed against fellow Muslims with no clearly defined objectives. As the clashes between IS and the Afghan Taliban rage on in neighbouring Afghanistan, Pakistani Taliban will come under tremendous pressure from Mullah Omar to clarify their position and reassert their loyalties.

Shujaat Bukhari, a veteran Kashmiri journalists, asks "why would the IS head to Kashmir?"[48]

He is of the view that an IS hoax is being exploited by New Delhi to legitimise the disproportionate Indian Army presence in Kashmir and the continuation of the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), and to discredit the Kashmiri struggle for self-determination. Bukhari's assertions are corroborated by official Indian response to IS's aspirations to acquire a nuclear bomb, possibly from Pakistan, and smuggle it to the US.8 While leading observers of global terrorism dismiss the ISIS nuclear ambition as one that "beggars belief",[49] the Indian Defence Minister backed the ISIS claims,[50] most probably with an intention to malign Pakistan and discredit its nuclear program. Such a gross exaggeration by Indian officials regarding an issue that concerns regional and global security will not do any good to international efforts aimed to understand and combat the ISIS.

Daesh, as the ISIS goes by its Arabic name, suffers from an image problem in South Asia.

While the likelihood that ISIS will acquire nuclear weapons has clearly been overemphasised, Kashmir's critical importance for regional jihadi outfits may not be. Daesh, as the ISIS goes by its Arabic name, suffers from an image problem in South Asia. In this context, Kashmir offers the opportunity to emerge as the protector of oppressed Muslims. For radicalised youth that seeks the excitement of war, the lure of IS is much stronger than the LeT, which is now attempting to redirect its cadres' energies towards social welfare services under the banner of Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation (Humans Welfare Foundation). If the IS is able to launch one symbolic attack in Indian-held Kashmir, it would have Lashkar-e-Tayeba and Jaish-e-Muhammad by the throat. Anticipating such a scenario, Kashmir-centric groups are under tremendous internal pressure to resume attacks in Indian-held Kashmir in order to avoid large-scale defections, maintain organisation cohesion, and protect their exclusive sphere of influence from IS encroachment.

The maximum IS can offer to local jihadis is "rebranding", and this is what Pakistani Taliban groups desperately need.

To conclude, a consensus of sorts exists among Pakistani counter-terrorism experts and policy-makers that the maximum IS can offer to local jihadis is "rebranding", and this is what Pakistani Taliban groups desperately need. These groups had been pushed to the brink of collapse by Operation Zarb-e-Azb, but the arrival of IS gives them a chance to rebuild and rebrand in order to appear strong and relevant. If the IS establishes footholds in the region, factional bloodshed can rage on. The reports hinting an emerging alliance between Iran and the Afghan Taliban could also motivate more sectarian elements within Pakistan to support the IS. But more than the actual presence of IS in South Asia, it is the

It is the confusion and distrust among major South Asian nations that will create more space for a group like IS to infiltrate and flourish.

confusion and distrust among major South Asian nations that will create more space for a group like IS to infiltrate and flourish. Indian official response to the arrival of IS strongly suggests that the policy-makers in New Delhi are either unable or unwilling to grasp the post-9/11 shifts in the regional militant landscape whereby these non-state actors have developed a momentum of their own. Any venture of the IS in Indian-held Kashmir can place India and Pakistan on the verge of war and both countries lack the crisis mitigation capacity to effectively forestall such a scenario.

Dr. Khuram Iqbal *holds a PhD in Policing, Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism from Macquarie University, Australia. He is currently serving as the Focal Person for Centre of Excellence on Counter-Terrorism at National Defence University, Pakistan*

9
THE ISLAMIC STATE: INDIA ISN'T ALARMED, YET.

by D. Suba Chandran

Summary:

- So far, the Indian government has downplayed the danger from returning Indian foreign fighters. Compared to other (particularly European) countries, the number of Indian Muslims fighting with Islamic State is miniscule.
- A recent history of low participation by Indian Muslims in global extremist networks like al-Qaeda and IS gives the Indian security establishment cause for cautious optimism.
- India's relatively stable and inclusive political processes provide outlets for Indian Muslims to pursue their agendas peacefully.
- India's secular institutions, particularly its education system, also provide a brake on extremism.
- Given the size of the Indian Muslim population, however, even a miniscule percentage of it becoming radicalised could be disastrous. The threat today comes not from the ISIL or the al-Qaeda, but from the infiltration of Salafist religious figures – many from Saudi Arabi – who increasingly challenge Sufi nature of Islam in India.

Introduction

Despite confirmed reports about few Indian citizens joining the Islamic State in Iraq, the Indian government is not alarmed and has not undertaken any substantial measures on the issue. Some countries in Europe and elsewhere have become alarmed and are taking political and legal steps to address the issue of their citizens joining ISIL. Besides addressing the issue of foreign fighters at national and international levels, these countries are also now focussing on addressing security issues that would emerge on their return as well as addressing the larger issue of domestic radicalisation. Both preventing radicalisation and de-radicalisation have become the primary focus of these countries as a counter strategy towards meeting the ISIL threat.

For its part, ISIL since announced the formation of the Islamic State, there have been few threats made against India. India, despite having the second largest Muslim population in the World (after Indonesia) is not really alarmed about the threat from Islamic State. Perhaps, there is a concern, but certainly not an alarm. Why?

Why India is not alarmed

When the report of four men from a small town in Maharashtra joining the Islamic State became public in August 2014, the issue of Indian youths joining the ISIL made the headlines. There were also reports in social media of youths joining or wanting to join the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Few arrests have been made, however, and despite occasional reports, the issue seems to have subsided subsequently.

The following factors could be account for the government (and to an extent even social) underplaying of the threat from Islamic State in India.

First, the number of youths who have joined the Islamic State so far from India, as a percentage of total Muslim population and the Indian population is negligible. When compared to other countries, for example the UK, Germany, France and other European countries, the number of Indian Muslims joining Islamic State is seen as an irrelevent trickle.

> Indian participation in Islamic State or other radical organisations, such as al-Qaeda, has always been negligible.

Second, the recent history of global terror networks and Indian participation in them has, largely, been a positive story. Indian participation in Islamic State or other radical organisations, such as al-Qaeda, has always been negligible. Even within South Asia, while the annual congregation organised by the parent organisation of the Lashkar-e-Toiba in Pakistan attracted Muslim youths from the region and from other parts of Asia (for example, Indonesia), there is no record of Indian Muslims taking part in such radical networks – either at the regional or global levels. Perhaps, the recent history of Indian Muslims not being a part of any trans-national terrorist networks provides a sense of confidence to the State.

Third, the intelligence apparatus in India has remained secular and strong in addressing the radical and extremist threat. Except for their covert support to separatist organisations in Sri Lanka during the 1980s, the intelligence organisations in India have not used non-State actors as strategic tools, as has Pakistan. Not only the intelligence

organisations, but the entire security apparatus including the military and para-military in India have pursued a strong course of action against non-State actors. Non-State actors, both at the national and global levels, are not perceived as a tool in domestic politics or in foreign policy strategy vis-a-vis another country. As a result, unlike in Pakistan and Afghanistan, there have been no strong connections between the State and global radical networks. It was these connections, during the 1990s in Afghanistan with al-Qaeda, and since the 1980s, in Pakistan, with Taliban, al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Toiba/Jaish-e-Mohammad, that created the space for international networks to recruit and train local youths.

Fourth, political stability and continuity in India, when compared to other countries in the region, have played a crucial role in keeping the process of radicalisation in check. Citizens lacked the motivation to get connected with international networks such as al-Qaeda and ISIL. Unlike in Pakistan and Bangladesh, civil-military relations in India have been positive and constitutionally guaranteed. The military plays a role as defined by the Indian Parliament and does not encourage or support any local groups vis-a-vis political parties, thereby keeping away from the larger political process. Political parties also do not have a vested interest in supporting any non-State actors.

India's internal political process, the peaceful change of governments, and the government's ability to govern have been better than the rest of South Asia. Elections have been held regularly and the government transitions have been regular and peaceful. Despite the problem of corruption and the inability of institutions, the State in India remains functional. More importantly, the State provides adequate space for minorities at political, social and religious levels.

Fifth, the educational structure in India, despite strong criticisms, has been an asset both at the government and private sector levels. From the University Grants Commission (UGC) at the national level to nursery schools in remote areas of the country the secular education remains competitive and affordable. The religious educational institutions also have to compete and provide an acceptable alternative to parents. As a result, despite teaching of religious strictures and theology, school systems either run by the State or by others including religious organisations, the curriculum remains modern, competitive and secular. In its neighbourhood, the failure of mainstream education has been the primary reason for the expansion of educational institutions run

by radical organisations that contribute to the radicalisation of young minds.

The constitution of India provides adequate space for religious institutions to function and manage their own affairs. From running educational institutions to managing their own social structure – religious minorities in India – Sikhs, Muslims and Christians – have sufficient legal and social space, that have been protected by the Supreme Court of India.

Sixth, Indian society has enough space for everyone within its fold. In this context, two great social domains of India, almost treated as a religion in themselves – Cricket and Bollywood – have created a huge space within which all Indian communities meet. The Indian film industry – perhaps the biggest in the world in terms of fan following today is led by the Khan triumvirate – Sharukh Khan, Salman Khan and Aamir Khan.

All three have a huge fan following cutting across regional and religious lines all over India. Similarly, Indian Cricket, one of the biggest sports industries at the global level, also has sufficient space for everyone.

At the political level, there is no constitutional provision excluding any Indian citizen from becoming the President and Prime Ministers of India based on their religion. Election of Abdul Kalam and Manmohan Singh as the President and Prime Minister of India were not only guaranteed constitutionally, but also accepted socially and politically by the entire society. For the Muslim youths in India, there are enough icons in the country to emulate. Neither bin Laden nor Baghdadi elicit attraction or serve as role models.

Seventh, the nature of Islam and the Muslim leadership in India acts as a cushion vis-a-vis radicalisation. The Sufi nature of Islam in India provides for a composite culture that is not only tolerant, but also attracts other individuals from other communities. For example, the shrine of the Sufi saint Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer near Jaipur in Rajasthan attracts devotees from different communities and from different parts of India. While the Ajmer Sharif is famous and attended by devotees from all over the world, there are similar shrines all over India. From Baba Ghulam Shah's shrine near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir to the dargah in Ervadi along the coast in Tamil Nadu, the country is dotted with Sufi shrines that act as a great agent of moderation and centres of inter-faith coordination. Along with the teachings of these great saints, the predominant

public faith in them acts as a deterrent from any radical ideologies finding space in India. Muslim political and religious leadership in India, while led by different schools, is also equally moderate.

Eighth, unlike in other countries with large Muslim populations, few global issues such as Palestine and Bosnia have become a rallying points for the Muslim youth in India. While well aware of global developments, the majority of Muslim youth have not been influenced to an extent that they would want to take up arms and fight for a larger cause. This is helped by the fact that India has remained neutral in most of these international issues.

Though untested, many believe that the Indian Parliament has been sensitive to its Muslim population and has avoided taking sides or sending troops to any of those conflict regions.

Apart from regional and international conflict, even the separatist violence in the predominantly Muslim Kashmir Valley not evoked widespread Muslim radical sentiment against the State across India. In most of the European States, the conflict in Palestine, Bosnia and ironically even J&K have become a factor in domestic radicalisation, but India has remained insulated from the global conflicts involving Muslims.

Finally, social media and related communication systems which have been blamed for the radicalisation and international recruitment of young people to ISIL and other violent extremist groups have not played a negative role in India. Not yet.

Should India not be worried?
So, is the threat from the ISIL totally unfounded in India?

If the above set of explanations does make a case, it should be seen in terms of its applicability to most of the Muslim community in India, which should be an overwhelming majority.

However, the threat of a small number getting radicalised cannot be totally discounted. The following factors would underline, why India should begin to consider appropriate actions, even if the threat does not yet justify alarm.

First, in terms of sheer numbers it may be insignificant, or even totally miniscule, but there are a few pockets of radicalised youth. The demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya in 1992, followed by a communal riot in Gujarat ten years

later have played a role in radicalising a small section of the Muslim population. The formation of Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and the Indian Mujahideen (IM) were a case in point. Though these movements have subsequently declined, either as a result of government action or due to lack of popular support, the formation and the operations of these radical groups do underline the reality that the lack of threat cannot be taken enirely for granted.

Second, more than the threat of the Islamic State (or al-Qaeda), the slow but steady onslaught of radical ideology with its roots in Saudi Arabia remains a cause for concern. While the elder generation remains attached to the Sufi Islam, the possibility that segments the younger generations Might be influenced by the Wahabi/Salafi ideology cannot be totally ruled out in India. Pockets of India, which have links with the Gulf countries in West Asia, especially Saudi Arabia, through contact with migrant workers returning from jobs in the Gulf region, do face a threat. Along with the remittances, there is a flow (though a trickle) of a new ideology ino India.

Given the size of the Indian Muslim population, even a miniscule percentage of it becoming radicalised could be disastrous. The threat today comes not from the ISIL or the al-Qaeda, but from the radical ideology trying to find space in Indian society and undermine the Sufi nature of Islam in India.

> The threat today comes not from the ISIL or the al-Qaeda, but from the radical ideology trying to find space in Indian society and undermine the Sufi nature of Islam in India.

India will have to protect its heritage and history and ensure that foreign ideologies and conflicts do not undermine its social cohesion. Instead of fighting it abroad, it will have to protect and safeguard what it has inside.

D. Suba Chandran is Director at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi.

END NOTES

1 - Ian Black, "Seizure of Palmyra and Ramadi by Isis reveal gaping holes in US jihadi strategy", The Guardian, 21 May 2015, _http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/21/seizure-of-palmyra-and-ramadi-by-isis-reveal-gaping-holes-in-us-jihadi-strategy_ (accessed 22 May 2015).

2 - Elliot Brennan, The Interpreter, 5 March 2015, _http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2015/03/05/How-should-we-respond-to-ISIS-in-Southeast-Asia.aspx?COLLCC=651738223&COLLCC=732768703&_ (accessed 21 May 2015). At a meeting on 15 July 2015 at the National Security Council in Manila it was suggested that press reports giving a figure of 200 Philippine ISIS recruits is too high.

3 - "Police: Syria Returnees Tied to Depok Chlorine Bomb", Agence France-Presse, 25 March 2015, _http://thejakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/news/police-syria-returnees-tied-depok-chlorine-bomb/_ (accessed 21 May 2015).

4 - Zakir Hussain, "ISIS posts footage of boy-trainees from South-east Asia", The Straits Times, _http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/south-east-asia/story/isis-posts-footage-boy-traineessouth-east-asia-20150317#sthash.2imSuZ4o.dpuf_ (accessed 21 May 2015).

5 - "Malaysia vs ISIS: A timeline of recent arrests linked to the militant group", The Straits Times, _http://www.straitstimes.com/news/asia/south-east-asia/story/malaysia-vs-isis-timelinerecent-arrests-linked-the-militant-group-2#sthash.9VrDuUyp.dpuf_ (accessed 21 May 2015).

6 - Bridget Welsh and Zachary Abuza, "Draconian Laws' False Sense of Security", bridgetwelsh.com, 15 April 2015, _http://bridgetwelsh.com/2015/04/draconian-laws-false-sense-of-security/_ (accessed 21 May 2015).

7 - Sumisha Naidu, "New anti-terror Bill was needed, says top Malaysian counter-terrorism official", Channel NewsAsia, 7 April 2015, _http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/new-anti-terror-billwas/1770180.html?cx_tag=similar#cxrecs_s_ (accessed 21 May 2015).

8 - Welsh and Abuza, "Draconian Laws' False Sense of Security".

9 - Azim Azman, "Friends and family need to be on the lookout against ISIS radicalization", The New Paper, 18 April 2015, _http://news.asiaone.com/news/singapore/friends-and-family-need-belookout-against-isis-radicalisation#sthash.HDQjn0kW.dpuf_ (accessed 21 May 2015).

10 - Kumar Ramakrishna, 'ISIS: Its Indirect Strategy Explained", 20 May 2015, _http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/isis-its-indirect-strategy-explained-part-1/_ (accessed 22 May 2015). I am grateful to RSIS colleague Professor Ahmed Hashim for information on the ISIS military structure.

11 - "ISIS reportedly teams up with another terror organization as they move in on Afghanistan", FoxNews.com, 20 May 2015, _http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2015/05/20/isis-reportedlyteams-up-with-another-terror-organization-as-move-in-on/_ (accessed 22 May 2015).

12 - Mubasher Bukhari, "Pakistan Arrest Local ISIS Commander", Al Arabiya News, 21 January 2015, _http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/asia/2015/01/21/Pakistan-arrests-local-ISIScommander-.html (accessed 22 May 2015)._

13 - Ulf Laessing, "ISIS is Moving into Ghadafi's Hometown in Libya", Business Insider, 21 May 2015, _http://www.businessinsider.com/r-gaddafis-home-town-falls-to-islamic-state-in-anarchic-libya-2015-5?IR=T&_ (accessed 22 May 2015).

14 - "ISIS Welcomes Boko Haram's Allegiance and Plays Down Coalition 'Victories'", The Guardian, 12 March 2015, _http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/12/isis-welcomes-bokoharams-allegiance-and-plays-down-coalition-victories_ (accessed 22 May 2015).

15 - Zakir Hussain, "Jakarta Nabs Four Foreigners with 'ISIS Connection'", The Straits Times, 15 September 2014, _http://www.stasiareport.com/the-big-story/asiareport/indonesia/story/jakarta-nabs-4-foreigners-isis-connection-20140915_ (accessed 22 May 2015).

16 - Ramakrishna, 'ISIS: Its Indirect Strategy Explained".

17 - For a seminal discussion of indirect and direct strategies, see General Andre Beaufre, An Introduction to Strategy, translated by Major-General R.H. Barry (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965).

18 - Dina Temple-Raston, "How to Take the Internet Back from ISIS", The New Yorker, 7 May 2015, http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/how-to-take-the-internet-back-from-isis (accessed 21 May 2015).

19 - "Profile: Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi", BBC News, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27801676 (accessed 22 May 2015).

20 - David Malet, "Our new era of crowdsourced terrorism", The Drum, 19 September 2014, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-19/malet-our-new-era-of-crowdsourced-terrorism/5754818 (accessed 22 May 2015).

21 - Carol Matlack, "Self-Sponsored Terror: Were the Charlie Hebdo Killers in a 'Wolf Pack'?", Bloomberg.com, 8 January 2015, http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/articles/2015-01-08/werecharlie-hebdo-killers-in-a-wolf-pack-the-new-way-of-terrorism (accessed 22 May 2015).

22 - "Sydney cafe attack: Hostage taker not on terror watch lists", Foxnews.com, 16 December 2014, http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/12/16/sydney-cafe-attack-portrait-emerges-gunmanman-haron-monis/ (accessed 22 May 2015).

23 - Amy Chew, "Malaysia 'at risk of lone-wolf attacks'", The Straits Times, 3 April 2015, http://www.straitstimes.com/st/print/3702373 (accessed 21 May 2015).

24 - Black, "Seizure of Palmyra and Ramadi".

25 - Diana al Rifai, 'Activist group says ISIL now controls half of Syria', Aljazeera, 22 May 2015. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/05/isil-expands-syria-territory-palmyra-capture-150521133817603.html

26 - ISIL drive in Iraq, Syria gains momentum as anniversary nears, 21 May 2015, The National. http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/isil-drive-in-iraq-syria-gains-momentum-as-anniversary-nears

27 - 'Remarks by President Obama in Address to the United Nations General Assembly', Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 24 September 2014, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-pressoffice/2014/09/24/remarks-president-obama-address-united-nations-general-assembly

28 - 'At debate, UN and Security Council Renew Pledge to Counter Foreign Terrorist Fighters', UN News Centre, 29 May 2015, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51005#.VXcikU2Jhdg

29 - A.P. Schmid, J. de Graaf, Violence as Communication: Insurgent Terrorism and the Western News Media (London: Sage, 1982), p. 14; Alex P. Schmid, "Terrorism as Psychological Warfare", Democracy and Security 1, No. 2 (2005), pp. 127-136.

30 - Thomas Koruth Samuel, Reaching the Youth: Countering the terrorist Narrative, Monograph published by the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, 2012.

31 - Harry Setyo R., Interview by Author.

32 - Marhmudi Hariano alias Yusuf, Interview by Author.

33 - Sidney Jones, Interview by Author.

34 - A. Ripley, "Reverse Radicalism", TIME, 13 March 2008, http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1720049_1720050_1722062,00.html.

35 - Frank Furedi. Invitation to Terror: The Expanding Empire of the Unknown (London: Continuum, 2007) p. 87.

36 - Alex P. Schmid , al-Qaeda's "Single Narrative" and Attempts to Develop Counter-Narratives: The State of Knowledge, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) Research Paper, January 2014

37 - Robin Wright, The Islamists are Coming. The Middle East: They've Arrived (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 23 August 2012), http://www.wilsoncenter.org/islamists/home?utm_source=newsletterandutm_medium=emailandutm_campaign=ww_08_23_12.

38 - Aaron Y. Zelin, "al-Qaeda in Syria: A Closer Look at ISIS (Part II)", Policy Watch 2138, 11 September 2013, http://washin.st/14LTvkC.

39 - Qatar International Academy for Security Studies, Countering Violent Extremism: The Counter Narrative Study (September, 2013), p. 192.

40 - Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Jack Barclay, Mastering the Narrative: Counterterrorism Strategic Communications and the United Nations (Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, 2013), http://www.globalct.org/publications/mastering-the-narrative-counterterrorism-strategic-communicationand-the-united-nations/.

41 - Michael Pizutto, Alter-Messaging: The Credible, Sustainable Counterterrorism Strategy (Goshen, Indiana: Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, May 2013), http://www.globalct.org/publications/alter-messaging-the-credible-sustainable-counterterrorism-strategy/.

42 - Zarb-e-Azb translates into the strike of the sword of Prophet Muhammad

43 - Amir Rana "What ISIS and the 'caliphate' mean for Pakistan" Dawn, 03 July 2014, *http://www.dawn.com/news/1116799*

44 - Sunan nisai(The book of Hadith) volueme 5, page 245

45 - For a detailed discussion pls see Husain Haqqani, "Prophecy & the Jihad in the Indian Subcontinent" Hudson Institute, 27 March 2012, *http://www.hudson.org/research/11167-prophecy-the-jihad-in-the-indian-subcontinent*

46 - Abdul Basit "Is IS a threat to Pakistan?" Express Tribune, 28 February 2015, *http://tribune.com.pk/story/845316/is-is-a-threat-to-pakistan/*

47 - Saima Khan, "Prospect for an ISIS-TTP Alliance" Express Tribune, 09 December 2014, *http://tribune.com.pk/story/803590/prospects-for-an-is-ttp-alliance/09 December 2014*

48 - Shujaat Bukhari, "Why would ISIS go to Kashmir?" The Friday Times, 24 October 2014, *http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/why-would-isis-go-to-kashmir/*

49 - Jenny Stanton, "ISIS claims it is 'infinitely' closer to buying a nuclear weapon from Pakistan and smuggling it into the US", Daily Mail, 22 May 2015, *http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3093244/ISIS-claims-infinitely-closer-buying-nuclear-weapon-Pakistan-smuggling-US.html*

50 - Anthony Glees, director of the Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies at the University of Buckingham, cited in Jenny Stanton, "ISIS claims it is 'infinitely' closer to buying a nuclear weapon from Pakistan and smuggling it into the US", Daily Mail, 22 May 2015, *http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3093244/ISIS-claims-infinitely-closer-buying-nuclear-weapon-Pakistan-smuggling-US.html*

51 - Alexander Sehmer, "Isis could obtain nuclear weapon from Pakistan, warns India", The Independent, 31 May 2015, *http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/india-warns-isis-could-obtain-nuclear-weapon-from-pakistan-10287276.html*

PHOTO CREDITS