

Conflict, Community, and Criminality in Southeast Asia and Australia

Assessments from the Field

A Report of the CSIS Transnational Threats Project

EDITORS

Arnaud de Borchgrave
Thomas Sanderson
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FOREWORD

Marc Sageman

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Cover photo credit: Small arms damage to the Krue Se Mosque sustained during a key battle between Thai security forces and insurgents in April 2004. Pattani Province, Thailand.

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FOREWORD

MARC SAGEMAN

I do hope that policymakers and opinion leaders will read this remarkable series of assessments of terrorism in Southeast Asia. They should read the actual assessments, which are already brief summaries of local situations, in their entirety. Decisions based on partial readings are already cartoon versions of reality and are necessarily couched in abstract simplistic arguments, familiar to Western policymakers. “Are we winning or losing the war on terror? Is al Qaeda on the run or on the move? Is al Qaeda a social movement or a network? Is it an ideology? Is al Qaeda franchising locally?” All these questions are nonsense, and these assessments, which rarely mention al Qaeda—an American obsession after the 9/11 tragedy—bring us back to the reality on the ground. I must warn the reader that these assessments are difficult to read because they are full of exotic foreign names, which are hard to keep straight, but the effort is definitely worth it because they collectively paint a concise picture of clarity as to the nature of the violent Islamist threat in Southeast Asia. In effect, they will recalibrate the debate on what to do about this threat.

The essays on Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Cambodia, Burma, and Australia have a thread in common: terrorism, like politics, is local. Yes, there is a superficial frame, which is shared by local terrorists, but the vicissitudes of violence vary according to local events. Except for training provided a decade earlier to some aspiring terrorists, al Qaeda is notably absent from the various accounts in the present collection. Indeed, the weak links to al Qaeda central, trumpeted in the West more than in Southeast Asia, obscure the local dynamics, showing an upsurge in the threat earlier in this decade and a general decline as time goes on. While the ideology is similar, local social conditions change, and law enforcement agencies learn to deal with their foes.

As the essays show, the situation is improving in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Australia. The situation is deteriorating in Thailand because violent Islamists wrapped themselves with separatist grievances, while the situation in the Philippines is so embedded in local politics that it is difficult to even analyze it in terms of “terrorism.” Indeed, there, the complexity of local factors well known to local inhabitants is obscured by the fears of Western politicians, who insist on putting strange labels on the belligerents. This reminds me of the situation in Africa in the 1970s, when the United States became alarmed at the prospect of Communism in countries that did not have any industry, let alone a proletariat. Such categories do not make sense in certain parts of the world. Now, they have been replaced by “al Qaeda,” “Islamist extremists,” “a clash of civilizations,” or some other fanciful nightmares of the polemic Western supremacists. This will not be a long war unless Asian governments choose to make it so, as the government of Thailand seems determined to do.

The local nature of the threat in Southeast Asia is demonstrated by the fact that virtually no Southeast Asians travel elsewhere to fight the jihad. Despite the fact that the Southeast Asian Muslim communities constitute a large proportion of Muslims worldwide, they do not travel much to other contemporary theaters of war, such as the West, or even the Middle East, to fight. They do not respond to a mythical al Qaeda Comintern and do not seem to be the recipient of feared envoys of such a global terrorist board of trustees in the past seven years.

The successes by various governments in fighting this threat have been local: good law enforcement directed specifically at the potential perpetrators and encouragement of mainstream Muslims, which undermines the arguments of those advocating violence. Indeed, the successes have not come from reframing the narratives or countering the ideology but from old-fashioned good police work and reducing local grievances, thereby undermining the appeal to violence. Indeed, the atrocities committed by local perpetrators stimulated local pushback, which ultimately defeated the appeal of violence for the pool of potential terrorist wannabes.

In Southeast Asia, as in the rest of the world, it would be naïve to believe that terrorism can be defeated. It is and will remain a tactic of the weak against their government, and Southeast Asia has seen its share throughout modern history. However, the appeal of Islam is fading in some theaters but gaining strength in a few others due to local reasons. In the future, terrorism in Southeast Asia may still be waged in the name of new concepts. The key to holding it in check is to not overreact, punish only the criminals directly involved in violence, and encourage young people that might be attracted to violent ideology to pursue their political activism in a more effective and lawful way.

Marc Sageman
Sageman Consulting, LLC




INTRODUCTION

These assessments were drafted by members of the CSIS Trusted Information Network project on Southeast Asia (TIN-2). To access the primary TIN-2 report, please see http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_pubs/task,view/id,5462/.

Because the TIN-2 discussion questions focused on overarching thematic issues, we felt it was important to draw on the tremendous and varied knowledge of the TIN-2 team to create a regional threat assessment. To this end, we asked TIN members to draft a short paper on their respective areas of expertise in late autumn 2008. These assessments illustrate what a modest level of outreach to nongovernmental experts can provide.

2

RADICAL ISLAM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA: A COMPARISON

Giora Eliraz

Any attempt to make comparative generalizations about Islamic radicalism by contrasting the Middle East with Southeast Asia faces methodological difficulties. These challenges are compounded by ambiguities in the term “Islamic radicalism.” In addition, the movements, organizations, groups, and individuals commonly associated with this term do not create a homogeneous entity. Nevertheless, some significant insights and observations can be suggested through such a comparison.

For centuries, the Muslim population of Southeast Asia has demonstrated a strong affiliation to the “center” of the Islamic world, particularly the Middle East. Varied channels and cultural brokers have transmitted Islamic knowledge and ideas from the Middle East, exposing Muslims in the Malay-Indonesian world to a broad spectrum of Islamic streams of thought.¹ Similarly, radical Islamic fundamentalist ideology, beliefs, and spirit have also found their way to Southeast Asia.²

Radical Muslims in Southeast Asia share tenets, rhetoric, organizational structures, operational thinking, and ways of action with their Middle Eastern counterparts. It should come as no surprise that these commonalities exist. Radicals from both areas drink from the same ideological well. They share a collective memory of formative events in the global jihad—such as the Afghan jihad against the Soviets in the 1980s—and there are those among the radicals in both regions who have links to the al Qaeda network.

There are many ideological commonalities between radical fundamentalists in these two areas. Both wish to see the establishment of the authority of God (*al-hakimiyya*) on Earth and place the vision of an Islamic state based on Islamic law (Shari’a) as supreme in their worldview. Like their Middle Eastern equivalents, Southeast Asian fundamentalists also regard the obligation of jihad, one’s duty to exert effort along God’s path, as significant. Furthermore, many among them give priority to the concept of the jihad by sword (*jihad bil-saif*, “striving through the sword”) and even interpret this armed jihad as a compulsory duty that has to be performed by every single Muslim (*fard ‘ayn*); this is distinguished from jihad as a collective duty of the Islamic community (*fard kifaya*). As in the Middle East, there are radical Muslims in Southeast Asia who are engaged

¹ See Eliraz Giora, *Islam in Indonesia: Modernism, Radicalism and the Middle East Dimension* (Brighton, U.K.: Sussex Academic Press, 2004), 44–56.

² *Ibid.*, 37–42.

in “jihad by tongue” (*jihad bil-lisan*). This approach seeks to propagate Islam and strengthen, through speech and writing, the faith of Muslims who have become lax in their beliefs. This duty is known in the Malay-Indonesian world as *dakwah* (*da’wa* in Arabic). Some radical fundamentalist movements and groups are engaged in both *da’wa* and armed jihad. Others are significantly inspired by an Islamic duty of “commanding right and forbidding wrong” (*amr bil-ma’ruf wal-nahi ‘an al-munkar*).³ Members of such groups raid “places of sin” and forcibly seek to impose Islamic moral values on society.

As is the case in other regions of the world, Islamic radical movements and groups in Southeast Asia and the Middle East require the “hated other” or “enemies.” Confrontation and opposition are essential to their vitality.⁴ The dichotomist approach of “we” (the “good”) and the “other” (the “evil”) inspire them. Naturally, radicals in the Middle East and Southeast Asia have their own particular “hated other.” But they also share enemies. Christians, for example, are perceived by radicals in both regions as dangerous “enemies of Islam.” Radical Muslims in Southeast Asia do not necessarily draw their perceptions of the enemy exclusively from their own experiences and reality. Among their perceived enemies are those included in “a radical package deal” transmitted from the “center” of the Islamic world to Southeast Asia. Thus, anti-Semitic expressions have infiltrated into the perception and rhetoric of radical Muslims in Southeast Asia alongside anti-American attitudes.

In order to prevent contamination and to maintain their purity, radicals need to demarcate the borders between their cultural enclave, the abode of the “faithful Muslims,” and that of the “false Muslims,” the unbelievers.⁵ Hence, radical Muslims in both the Middle East and Southeast Asia see it as their duty to identify unbelievers and infidels. Because of this obligation, they both regard the concept of *takfir*—the excommunication of an individual from the *umma*, or charging a person with unbelief or apostasy—as important. The view that divides the world between *dar al-Islam* (the territory of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (the territory of war), which is common among radical Muslims, has also been adopted by radicals in Southeast Asia.

Though there is a strong resemblance between Islamic radicalism in the Middle East and in Southeast Asia, we should avoid wide brushstrokes and categorizing every call for jihad in Southeast Asia as a reflection of Middle Eastern radical Islam. Any attempt to ignore the local context and view Islamic radicalism in Southeast Asia through a strictly Middle Eastern lens or the ambiguous lens of “global jihad” is doomed to fail. The unique local contexts in which the Southeast Asian radical players act produce distinctive case studies. Laskar Jihad’s military

³ On the Islamic duty of *amr bil-ma’ruf wal-nahi ‘an al-munkar*, see Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴ Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, “Conclusions: An Interim Report on a Hypothetical Family,” in *Fundamentalism Observed*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 820–821.

⁵ See *Ibid.*

involvement in the Maluku Island conflict from 2000 to 2002, for example, cannot be simply summarized as another manifestation of a “universal” Islamic radicalism or “global jihad.” The same holds true for the militant Islamic separatism in the southern Philippines and southern Thailand, whose roots preceded the contemporary phenomenon of Islamic radicalism.

But perhaps the greatest difference between the two regions, with regard to Islamic radicalism, is a distinctive cordon sanitaire that exists in countries like Indonesia and, to a lesser degree, Malaysia. It is striking that although Indonesia possesses certain circumstances that have proven vital for Islamic radicalism in the Middle East, Islamic radicals in that country only constitute a tiny proportion of the vast Muslim population and are kept on the fringes of society.⁶ The reason for this phenomenon seems to be a product of Indonesia’s unique fabric of polity, society, and culture. Indonesia’s long-established tradition of religious pluralism and tolerance, which is deeply anchored in the tradition of Sufism, is one example of this. So is the assertive, influential moderate Muslim mainstream that played a leading role, unknown in the Middle East, in the democratization of Indonesia and the construction of a robust civil society.

Indonesia’s moderate Muslim mainstream also shows a commitment to combating religious extremism and militancy. The distinctively influential voice of liberal Islam in Indonesia, also unknown in the Middle East, delivers a comprehensive countermessage to the radical worldview, militancy, and terror. The influential concept of “cultural Islam” as a competing concept to political Islam and Indonesia’s religiously neutral ideology, the Pancasila, also contributes to the ideals of tolerance and pluralism.⁷

Radical and militant Islam has grown stronger during Indonesia’s transition to democracy. In the first years of the post-Soeharto era, the absence of authoritarianism that restrained the political expression of Islam pushed Indonesia into political turmoil that was largely marked by sectarian conflict, religious extremism, and even threats of terror. Perhaps the building of Indonesia’s liberal democracy, almost unknown in the Arab Middle East, will function in the long run as a significant bulwark against Islamic radicalization. The availability of democratic channels of political participation for those who wish to promote an Islamic political agenda may moderate proponents of political Islam, making them committed partners in democracy building and more receptive to national values of tolerance and pluralism.

Though Malaysian democracy is commonly observed as having limitations and shortcomings, it still presents an interesting model of democracy in a predominantly Muslim country. In Malaysia, like Indonesia, radical Muslims enjoy an opportunity to promote their vision of an Islamic state through democratic channels. The Malaysian polity prevents Islamists from monopolizing the

⁶ Such similar circumstances include, for example, the cultural bewilderment and distress that follow a process of modernization, economic hardships, and annoyance with the luxurious life of elites.

⁷ For a wider discussion on bulwarks against Islamic radicalism in the Indonesian context, see Giora Eliraz, *Islam and Polity in Indonesia: An Intriguing Case Study* (Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute, 2007), 6–12, http://www.futureofmuslimworld.com/research/pubID.62/pub_detail.asp.

Muslim voice and agenda. This is largely due to the government's Islamic countermessage embodied in the progressive, moderate concept of civilizing Islam, known as *Islam Hadhari*. In addition to the basic tenet of faith and piety, this concept includes ideals such as progress, modernization, science, knowledge, protection of women, minority rights, and multiculturalism. Islamists in the Middle East do not face a similar challenge.⁸

The vivid Islamic discourse in Malaysia even yields some countervoices to religious extremism from within civil society. An intriguing example is the Sisters in Islam (SIS).⁹ This group of Muslim professional women aims to achieve women rights by arguing, among other things, that oppression and ill-treatment of women is not found in the foundations of Islam. Instead, they argue, this conduct results from a process of interpretation and codification dominated by male jurists and scholars. They also blame the cultural practices and values of a patriarchal society.

The case of the southern Philippines and southern Thailand is different. In these two areas, separatist aspirations and Islamic radicalism often intersect. The overall contexts of both areas do not provide a similar set of bulwarks against Islamic radicalism as found in Indonesia or Malaysia. It seems that it is mainly the power of the central government—as is often the case in the Middle East—that opposes radical, militant Muslims.

The Islamic separatist aspirations in these two areas are deeply grounded in the local context. Their roots are based, among other things, on a yearning for the Islamic “golden age” that included the sultanates of Mindanao, Solo, and Pattani. These separatist aspirations are also nourished by a sense of being Muslims who are living at the boundary of *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb* and by a refusal within Muslim-minority communities to submit to the rule of “infidels” (*kuffar*).

These formative elements are strengthened by current grievances on political, economic, social, cultural, and religious grounds and join the contemporary dilemma of reconciling the demands of traditional Islam with the citizenship requirements of a non-Muslim, modern state. Certainly, the confluence between separatism and radical Islamic ideas is basically unknown in the predominantly Muslim Middle East.

⁸ On *Islam Hadhari*, see, for example, Terence Chong, “The Emerging Politics of *Islam Hadhari*,” in *Malaysia: Recent Trends and Challenges*, ed. Saw Swee-Hock and K. Kesavapany (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006), 26–46; and Ioannis Gatsiounis, “Islam Hadhari in Malaysia,” *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 3 (February 2006): 78–88,

http://www.futureofmuslimworld.com/research/pubID.43/pub_detail.asp.

⁹ On Sisters in Islam, see, for example, Zainah Anwar, “What Islam, Whose Islam?: Sisters in Islam and the Struggle for Women’s Rights,” in *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 227–252.

3

THE MIDDLE EAST, ISLAMISM, AND INDONESIA: PULL VERSUS PUSH FACTORS

Anthony Bubalo

In 2005, Greg Fealy and I wrote a paper examining the influence of Islamism from the Middle East in Indonesia.¹ In large part, the paper was stimulated by a view in Australia, but also in Indonesia and elsewhere, that Middle Eastern influences were radicalizing Indonesian Islam. As our paper argued, such an attitude reflected two misconceptions. One was a perception of Indonesian Islam as almost exclusively moderate and irenic. Although the overwhelming majority of Indonesian Muslims fit this image, such a view ignored the significant strands of radicalism and militancy that, historically, have also been present within Indonesian Islam.

The other misconception, closely related to the first, was that if there were negative factors to be found within Indonesian Islam, they were the result of certain elements within Indonesia's Muslim community being infected by "the Middle Eastern disease." Militancy was seen as being pushed into Indonesia by outside nefarious influences. What this underestimated was the degree to which elements within Indonesia actively sought out militant ideas, finance, and training from the Middle East. In other words, it was not just about push factors, it was also about pull.

Reality, as is usually the case, is even more complex than this. The flow of militant ideas, doctrines, funding, and training has all occurred alongside a far broader transmission of ideas, people, and material support related, very broadly (and sometimes very tangentially), to Islam. This includes everything from interest within Indonesia in Middle Eastern forms of Islamic religiosity and the travel of Indonesian students to Arab centers of Islamic learning to the activism of Middle Eastern-based Islamic charities in Indonesia, all facilitated by the forces of globalization. Moreover, these transfers, whether malign or benign, have rarely ever been received within Indonesia passively. In most cases, there has been a process of indigenization at work, absorbing what was seen to be applicable to Indonesia and discarding what was not.

¹ Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, *Joining the Caravan? The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia*, Lowy Institute Paper 05 (Alexandria, Aust.: Lowy Institute, 2005), <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/Publication.asp?pid=229>; for an abridged version of that paper, see also, Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, *Between the Global and the Local: Islamism, the Middle East, and Indonesia* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2005), <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/Publication.asp?pid=229>.

Which Islam? Which Islamism?

To understand these transmissions between the Middle East and Indonesia (and more broadly, Islamic Southeast Asia), it is important to be clear about what is being transmitted. The various flows from the Middle East to Indonesia (related to Islam) can be divided into three broad categories: those related to matters of Islamic *religiosity*; those concerned with Islam as an *ideology*; and those that provide or support a *narrative* for activism, typically of a militant variety.

Of the three categories, flows related to Islamic religiosity are by far the most significant. These are defined by their focus on matters of Islamic creed, religious practice, and education, although these influences are extremely diverse and date back centuries from the very arrival of Islam to Indonesia.² Contemporary examples include not only religious and language education provided by Islamic institutions in the Middle East (and their branches in Indonesia) and the Salafist preaching in Indonesia by groups and individuals from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries (Kuwait, Yemen), but also the ideas of “liberal” Islamic thinkers; activism by Middle Eastern charities (insofar as charity reflects both a central obligation of the Islamic faith and a vehicle for preaching); and the published translations of popular Middle Eastern Islamic scholars, notably Yusuf al-Qaradawi.

Those flows focused on an ideological reading of Islam would comprise the second most important category. Here, I am, of course, referring to the transmission of Islamist ideas. By Islamism I mean not just the ideologization of Islam, but a set of specific ideas that propose the revival of Islam as the basis for societal reform, with the ultimate goal being the establishment of an Islamic state (or system) defined by its implementation of Shari’a (crudely, Islamic law). The most prominent examples of Middle Eastern Islamic influence of an ideological variety would be the Muslim Brotherhood and, more recently, Hizb ut-Tahrir.

One might include in this ideological category those influences and flows of training and money from al Qaeda to its Indonesian partisan, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Yet for a number of reasons, it makes more sense, arguably, to place these influences in a different category. The French scholar Olivier Roy has referred to al Qaeda as providing less of an ideology than a “narrative.”³ That narrative portrays the sufferings of Muslims globally as a result, primarily, of Western persecution and emphasizes the role of individual Muslims or a small vanguard working to avenge that persecution by striking back at the West.⁴ For Roy, it is precisely because al Qaeda tries to marshal diverse conflicts into a common struggle to defend a virtual *umma* that limits its ability to provide

² For an excellent overview of the historical interchange of Islamic thinking, see Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia*, Southeast Asia Publications Series (Canberra: Asian Studies Association of Australia, 2004).

³ Olivier Roy, *Al Qaeda in the West as a Youth Movement: The Power of a Narrative*, CEPS Policy Brief 168 (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, August 2008), http://shop.ceps.eu/BookDetail.php?item_id=1698.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

anything more specific than this very generalized narrative. Militant action becomes an end in itself.

This is not to suggest that JI and other jihadi groups in Indonesia have not also been influenced by more explicitly ideological militant Islamist thought from the Middle East. There is, for example, evidence that JI's General Declaration of Struggle was drawn from the Charter of Islamic Action of the militant Egyptian group al-Gama'a al-Islamiyyah.⁵ But it is also true that alongside its historical militant Islamist goals aimed at establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia and a regional caliphate, one part of JI came to adopt al Qaeda's narrative of struggle against the West. This decision had specific consequences, reflected in the targeting of Westerners in Indonesia and neighboring countries, most infamously in the Bali bombings of 2002.

As the foregoing implies, while useful from an analytical perspective, these three categories cannot be viewed too rigidly. There are gray areas and overlaps among them, and not just between ideological and narrative categories. In the past, funding for charitable and *da'wa* purposes (that is, from within the broad category of religiosity above) has ended up in militant hands. Indeed, in our 2005 paper we recounted our own contacts with the then-head of the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), who noted that individual Saudi donors had been scared off from providing charity to the organization because of some cases where IIRO offices (including in Southeast Asia) had been used to fund extremists.⁶ It is also important not to conflate different influences from the Middle East (see below) and to recognize that we still have a pretty incomplete picture of such flows from the Middle East to Indonesia and the broader Southeast Asian region.

Push, Pull, and Push Away

As already noted, where ideas from the Middle East are being proselytized or being appropriated in Indonesia, there is almost always a process of local adaptation going on, which can also change over time. Historically, the key conduit for al Qaeda's influence into Indonesia (and Southeast Asia more broadly) was the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets in the 1980s. Some hundreds of Indonesians went through jihadi training camps, and it was in these camps that links among people who would go on to form the nucleus of both al Qaeda and JI were established (JI did not exist as an organization when Indonesians first started going to Afghanistan).⁷

⁵ Bubalo and Fealy, *Joining the Caravan? The Middle East, Islamism and Indonesia*, 82.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷ For a full discussion of this, see International Crisis Group, *Indonesia Background: How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates*, Asia Report 43 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, December 11, 2002), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1397&CFID=70514125&CFTOKEN=18844882>; and International Crisis Group, *Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous*, Asia Report 63 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, August 26, 2003), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?!=1&id=1452>.

That initial connection certainly reflected both elements of push and pull. It was through this connection that al Qaeda was able to push its narrative in Southeast Asia, reinforced by the money and training it was also able to provide. Indeed, initially al Qaeda had more success in Southeast Asia and other areas at the periphery of the Muslim world (such as Chechnya or Europe) than it had in the Middle East in lining up militant Islamists behind its narrative. Most established militant groups in the Middle East by and large rejected its call for action against “the far enemy.”

In terms of pull factors, the initial attraction of the Afghan jihad for those that would go on to form JI, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Bashir, was that it provided a place to acquire military training to be used in domestic conflicts in Indonesia. But it is also true that some of those Indonesians who went to Afghanistan returned with a more globalist outlook. It was this group within JI (notably those around JI figure Hambali) that responded most favorably to Osama bin Laden’s famous call in February 1998 for the formation of a “World Islamic Front” against “Jews and Crusaders” and went on to carry out the Bali bombings, among other attacks.

As Sidney Jones has argued, not everyone within JI accepted bin Laden’s reasoning. His 1998 fatwa prompted considerable debate within JI. Since the Bali bombings, tensions between those keen to follow the al Qaeda narrative and attack Western targets and those keen to keep JI’s militant and proselytizing energies focused on local concerns in Indonesia have persisted and strengthened. For the latter group, the harsh security-driven reaction of the Indonesian state and the antipathy among ordinary Indonesians caused by the Bali bombings and subsequent attacks (in which typically more Indonesians were killed than Westerners) reaffirmed the imprudence of prioritizing global over local concerns.

Ultimately, at least in terms of jihadi activism, pull rather than push factors seem to play a bigger role. Indonesia (and Southeast Asia more broadly) has never been a key topic in bin Laden’s rhetoric. There were some exceptions, notably bin Laden’s November 2001 letter to Al Jazeera’s Kabul bureau, in which he accused Australia’s “Crusader armies” of separating East Timor from Indonesia. But, perhaps reflecting al Qaeda’s preoccupation with Iraq, in recent years Indonesia has hardly rated a mention, if at all. Given both the strong possibility, in my view, that al Qaeda and the jihadi trend will become even more preoccupied with the Middle East broadly defined (including Afghanistan and Pakistan), and the limitations that have been placed on the movement of extremists and their money since 9/11, this drift away from Southeast Asia will probably continue.

This is not to say that Middle Eastern jihadi thinkers have become unimportant in Indonesia, or that events in the Middle East no longer provide an important backdrop for the jihadi worldview in Southeast Asia. But the key role in the transmission of these ideas is still going to be played by locals. An excellent example of this is Indonesia’s burgeoning jihadi translation and publishing industry. As Sidney Jones has noted, Indonesian jihadists have been eclectic and promiscuous in their translation of various Middle Eastern militant thinkers and writers—to the extent where they have even translated some of the debates among Middle Eastern jihadists over al Qaeda’s

strategy, potentially feeding them into local debates about the continuing applicability of the al Qaeda narrative to the Indonesian context.⁸

I would argue that this also reflects more than just the break in physical contact between al Qaeda and parts of JI caused by the arrest of Hambali in particular. As al Qaeda's decline in Iraq has underlined, its narrative is often going to generate tensions between local and global agendas. As Olivier Roy and others have pointed out, it is no coincidence that its appeal has been strongest among the uprooted and dislocated, for whom a global struggle in defense of a virtual *umma*, where acts matter more than specific ends, is always going to make more sense. Even in the Indonesian case, the members of JI most attracted to the al Qaeda narrative were the ones like Hambali who found themselves living in exile outside of Indonesia.

Of course, this does not mean that push factors won't still play some role and that small groups of Middle Eastern jihadists might not turn up in Indonesia or elsewhere in Southeast Asia. More generally, despite the great pressure placed on the activities (both malign *and* in some cases benign) of a range of charitable and *da'wa* organizations since the start of the Global War on Terror, these activities still take place in Indonesia and neighboring countries. In this regard, Salafist *da'wa* from the Persian Gulf will still generate concern, given the role played by some of these organizations in the past as facilitators for extremist and xenophobic ideas, and for money, training, and people. Yet it is also important to remember that such activities are also not in every case linked with militant activity and terrorism.⁹

⁸ International Crisis Group, *Indonesia: Jemaah Islamiyah's Publishing Industry*, Asia Report 147 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, February 28, 2008), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5324>.

⁹ See International Crisis Group, *Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Don't Mix*, Asia Report 83 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, September 13, 2004), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2967&l=1>.

4

JEMAAH ISLAMIYAH AND NEW SPLINTER GROUPS

Sidney Jones

Jemaah Islamiyah, the organization that carried out the 2002 Bali bombings, has fallen on hard times six years later. As a social network of men and women with family, business, school, and organizational ties, it remains strong, indeed, unbreakable. But as a political organization, it is divided, cash strapped, and to some degree rudderless. If there is a clear goal, it is to work for a state in which Islamic law can be applied in full. But because in democratic Indonesia it is perfectly possible to do this openly, it is unclear what JI's organizational advantage is—and many members are joining above-ground organizations.

The fracturing of JI is not taking place the way some expected. There was concern, particularly after JI's October 2005 beheadings of three Christian schoolgirls, that as the organizational structure weakened, individual cells would go off on their own, operating independently of the central command.

But that is not what has happened; we are not seeing a proliferation of little JIs. Instead, we are seeing major new fault lines emerge within the organization as a whole over, for example, whether it should remain clandestine or emerge in the open or whether men who have been exposed through arrest and imprisonment can return to active roles. We are also seeing new groups emerge that cross organizational lines, as the splinter group around Noordin Mohammed Top—the Malaysian JI member—did from 2004 onward. These groups include:

- Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's new organization, Jama'ah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT). Established in September 2008, JAT includes individuals from the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI); small regionally based groups; the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI); and JI. As of October 2008, JI leaders differed over whether one could take an induction oath (*baiat*) to JAT and retain JI membership.
- A small group arrested in Palembang, South Sumatra, in July 2008. At its core were two fugitives, one from the jihadi organization KOMPAK (Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisis—action committee for crisis response) and one from JI, but most of its other members were drawn from a local anti-apostasy organization, with no previous involvement in violence.
- Jama'ah Tauhid wal Jihad. This organization grew up around a radical Salafi preacher, Aman (Oman) Abdurrahman, imprisoned in 2004 for running a bomb-making class on the outskirts of Jakarta and known primarily for his translations of the Jordanian radical,

Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. Focused on purifying the faith and rejecting any government that does not apply Islamic law in full, Aman, who was released in July 2008, attracted followers from Darul Islam, KOMPAK, JI, and the Hizb ut-Tahrir splinter group, al-Muhajirun. He became a member of the JAT executive council in September and may have brought his followers with him.

- The combined combat units of Mindanao-based Umar Patek and Dulmatin, both JI members, who for the last several years have been working with a small group of men from KOMPAK, Darul Islam, and JI in the Philippines. Their activities, discussed below, could have a profound effect on the evolution of regional jihadism.

New groups that include JI members are emerging around charismatic figures or locally important issues (e.g., opposing “deviant” religious teaching). There is as yet little seepage into Islamist political parties because of the strong rejection of man-made as opposed to God-made laws, but a few JI members have even crossed that line, developing cordial relations with local branches of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and Crescent-Star Party (PBB).

JI has been left severely weakened in terms of geographical reach, leadership, resources, and message. Its administrative structure in Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia has been crushed, although individual members remain, particularly in Malaysia. A few dozen JI members remain in the Jabal Quba camp on Mount Cararao, in Maguindanao, Philippines, but the JI central command is increasingly unable to provide for them. That means that as an organization, JI is largely restricted to Indonesia.

In terms of leadership, JI has not found a leader of real caliber since the death of its founder Abdullah Sungkar in 1999. Abu Bakar Ba’asyir was considered such a weak successor that many JI members, when invited to join JAT in 2008, refused on the grounds that Ba’asyir had failed so badly in running JI, then MMI, that they were not about to follow him to a new organization. (Some parts of JI did, however; the East Java *wakalah* seems to have gone over wholesale.) After Ba’asyir, there was a succession of caretaker emirs, each of them lasting only a year or two until he in turn was arrested, never long enough to give strategic direction to the organization. The leadership qualities sought by JI’s central command include religious knowledge, military experience, and seniority, and the number of plausible candidates is dwindling—and aging.

When Zarkasih, alias Nu’aim, was arrested in 2007 as head of JI, he claimed, apparently truthfully, that he was only head of the “emir search committee.” His successor as temporary emir may be a *pesantren* director and JI founding member from Semarang, but the fact remains that JI today is a group in search of a leader. If a strong charismatic figure suddenly appeared on the scene, it could reignite enthusiasm for military operations, particularly among younger militants. Noordin had this impact on a JI cell in Semarang in 2005, and some Indonesians now in Mindanao, if they return home, could similarly breathe life into a movement now focused on religious outreach (*dakwah*) and education—or in other words, on rebuilding the base.

The obvious factor in the weakening of JI has been the hundreds of arrests and penetration of the organization by Indonesian police. But another key factor has been the loss of a strong local motivation for military-style operations. It is important to remember that even at the height of its power, JI never fell into the three main categories of a terrorist organization: it was not fighting occupation or domination by a non-Muslim power; it was not facing repression at home, at least not at the time it began to use violence; and its members were not part of an alienated minority. All members were committed to coming to the defense of Muslims under attack, but after 1996, it was largely the few men around Hambali and Mukhlas, most of them Indonesians living in exile in Malaysia, who accepted the al Qaeda doctrine of global jihad against the United States and its allies. It was never the strategy of the organization as a whole.

What drove JI members to violence in 1999 to 2000 was overwhelmingly the communal conflict in Ambon and Poso, leading to Muslim deaths at Christian hands, and to a much lesser extent, attacks by the Philippine military on the main camp of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), where JI had established a training academy. Ali Imron, one of the Bali bombers, also notes in his 2007 autobiography that he and his brothers believed that, with the post-Soeharto political turmoil in Jakarta, the Islamic revolution in Indonesia might be at hand.

Today, Ambon and Poso are quiet. An Islamic revolution is not around the corner. Post-Soeharto democratization, and the political space that opened up for organizations committed to Islamic law, undermines the uniqueness of JI's message, especially now that it is focusing on *dakwah*. If there is no active jihad to fight, what makes JI more attractive than Hizb ut-Tahrir, a semi-clandestine organization committed to the reestablishment of the caliphate that is growing by leaps and bounds on Indonesian university campuses; or local groups committed to purifying the faith through attacking places of vice; or anti-apostasy organizations that mobilize community support against aggressive Christian evangelicalism? In peaceful, democratic Indonesia, the distinctiveness of JI's message is not clear.

JI itself was the product of a younger, more militant wing emerging from an aging radical movement, Darul Islam, which rebelled against the young Indonesian government in the 1950s. In turn, it has spawned a few young, militant groups. One of these is Laskar Ababil, reportedly led by a young religious scholar from Central Java arrested for assisting Noordin Top and released from prison in 2007. He supposedly sees himself in a Hambali-like role, as head of a new JI special forces unit. The difference is that as an ex-prisoner and known figure, he is almost certainly under intense police surveillance. And Laskar Ababil, however strongly committed to the al Qaeda view of the world, will founder without a local cause like Ambon to drive it.

JI's lack of clear message now may be one reason for the proliferation of new groups. But it also suggests that we should be paying much more attention to the areas where local jihads, in the view of JI members, *are* happening—Mindanao and southern Thailand.

When conflict resumed between the Philippine armed forces and the MILF in August 2008, the fighting was in North Cotabato and Maguindanao, in the area under the control of MILF commanders with long-standing links to JI and other foreign jihadists. It resonated back in

Indonesia immediately. In October 2008, Ba'asyir mentioned Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Philippines in one breath when talking about places where Muslims were under attack; daily reports of the fighting appear on Indonesian jihadi Web sites.

More ominously, information from October 2008 suggests that the fighting has made movement easier between the JI men in the Mount Cararao camp and the units led by Patek and Dulmatin. We are not going to see a flood of Indonesians to Mindanao, as vigilance on the part of security forces of both countries together with Malaysia have made travel more difficult. But even a few people going back and forth with stories of atrocities, true or not, can reinvigorate young militants and inspire new actions, just as the Philippine Army attacks on the MILF did in 2000.

The current round of violence in southern Thailand that began in January 2004 has had more of the hallmarks of an insurgency than a jihad, but since mid-2008, jihadi groups in Indonesia and Malaysia seem finally to have found receptive contacts in the deep south. They have circulated interviews with individuals claiming that the struggle there is a genuinely Islamic one, not “poisoned” by nationalism—a view that runs counter to all available evidence. Thanks to intensive exhortations on the Internet, many of the region’s jihadists are coming to see Pattani Darussalam, as it is called, as the next theater of war, and we may begin to see movement from Indonesia (Sumatra) through Malaysia to Thailand pick up, albeit from a base of almost nil.

More receptivity in Thailand and the Philippines to assistance from their jihadi brethren could halt the slow decline in Indonesian jihadism and give a new boost to JI’s more militant members; recruitment is always enhanced by the opportunity to fight. Failing that, JI is likely to see further erosion of its ranks.

That leaves JI as the social network. This is the huge advantage it has over any other jihadi group in the region. Its 35 or so schools continue to produce a new generation of potential mujahideen who will intermarry, set up businesses together, and send their children to the same playgroups. In the absence of a strong rationale for jihad, groups like KOMPAK, comprised of veterans of the Ambon and Poso conflict, will probably fade away. By contrast, JI can weather a long hiatus—even the dissolution of its political structure—and still be around to take the lead if a new cause emerges in 2020.

5

CAN INDONESIAN DEMOCRACY TAME RADICAL ISLAMISM?

Greg Fealy

Two main questions emerge when considering the impact of democracy on Islamic radicalism in Indonesia: first, do electoral imperatives constrain the Indonesian government in responding to the threat posed by radical and especially terrorist groups; and second, does democracy hold the prospect of drawing militant Muslims away from violence and into peaceful and constitutional political activities? I will discuss each of these questions separately.

A number of observers have, in recent years, criticized the Megawati and Yudhoyono governments for perceived failures in managing Islamic radicalism. The common charge is that these governments, although aware of the magnitude of the threat posed by radical groups, are hesitant or halfhearted in taking action because they fear that any crackdown will lead to a backlash from the Islamic community. Two authors to have argued this in books published within the past year are Bilveer Singh, *Talibanization of Southeast Asia* (Vij Books, 2008), and Sadanand Dhume, *My Friend the Fanatic* (Skyhorse, 2009). Both assert that Yudhoyono sees himself as electorally vulnerable to Islamist attacks, and he thus relies on strong policies to combat radicalism. These and other proponents of this view suggest that Indonesia's "messy" democracy leads governments to compromise on good policy.

With some exceptions, this criticism of the Megawati and Yudhoyono governments is overdrawn, and most evidence indicates that they have reasonably good records, particularly in responding to terrorist and violent vigilante groups. Following the first Bali bombing in October 2002, Indonesian officials, with the help of foreign police and intelligence agencies, launched a sweeping crackdown on Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), leading to waves of arrests and prosecutions. In the past six years, more than 300 individuals have been detained on terrorism-related offences, with some 170 being tried and convicted. Six of those found guilty are on death row, but the most common sentences range from three to seven years.

Few, if any, other countries can match Indonesia for the number of arrests and celerity of prosecution. Furthermore, most of the trials have been conducted according to due process, and there has been little criticism from legal NGOs of state interference in judicial procedures. The impact of this crackdown on JI and other terrorist groups has been marked. Probably more than two-thirds of JI's central leadership has been incarcerated and numerous others put to flight. Five of the six emirs since 2002 (Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Thoriquddin, Adung, Zarkasih, and Abu Husna) have been arrested; four have been found guilty and jailed; and the fifth is soon to go on trial. Moreover, JI's operations have been heavily disrupted. The number of members and branches has

declined sharply, and the range of JI activities has narrowed considerably. Perhaps most importantly, the crackdown and concomitant hardening of public attitudes toward extreme jihadism have galvanized the less violent sections of JI to assert control of the organization and reorient it away from terrorism and toward greater education and proselytization.

In general, the Megawati and Yudhoyono governments were content to allow the police to conduct antiterrorist operations without hindrance and often praised police when major JI figures were captured or planned operations thwarted. The Megawati government passed an interim antiterrorism regulation (*perpu*) within weeks of the 2002 Bali bombing, which was later passed into law by the parliament. Her government also cosponsored the listing of JI on the UN register of terrorist organizations in late 2002.

There are several grounds, however, on which these Indonesian governments can be criticized. To begin with, despite backing JI's listing as a terrorist group, Indonesia has yet to ban the organization. Although the benefits of formal proscription are often overstated, the police and other regulatory authorities could act more effectively if JI was banned, as such status allows more thorough investigation of the organization's diverse activities.

Another disappointing aspect of the government's response has been the failure to lead public debate in rejecting radical activities and ideologies. Very few ministers have made strong statements against radical groups, whether terrorist or paramilitary, and much of the initiative for counter-radicalization campaigns has come from mainstream organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, often with funding from foreign aid agencies. One of the Yudhoyono government's few initiatives was to establish a Terrorism Eradication Team (TPT) comprising *ulama* and Islamic intellectuals, but this proved utterly ineffective and is now inactive.

Undoubtedly, Yudhoyono is wary of any action that may incur the wrath of Islamist groups, and this does curb any inclination he might otherwise have had to lead the public discourse against Islamic militancy. For example, in the first two years of his presidency, he steadfastly refused to acknowledge that JI was an Indonesia-based terrorist group. To my knowledge, he has still not made a statement referring to JI as a homegrown radical group, though his vice president has done so on several occasions. But the more important consideration is that Yudhoyono continues to support the police campaigns against JI and other radical groups. While this high-level political cover is in place, the police are likely to continue with successful operations against radical groups.

The second major question relates to democracy providing an attractive alternative to violence for radical Muslims. There is a large scholarly literature discussing the relationship between political repression and radicalism, with most writers concluding that lack of political opportunities and justice are important contributory factors in the rise of extremism.

In the case of Indonesia, there is considerable evidence to support the view that the four decades of authoritarianism from the late 1950s radicalized many Islamist groups. During Sukarno's "Guided Democracy" (1959–1966) and especially during Soeharto's "New Order" regime (1966–

1998), political Islam was one of the main targets of state repression. Sukarno banned the largest Islamic party, Masyumi, in 1960, and several other important Islamic bodies were under constant threat of proscription in the mid-1960s. Soeharto limited the number of Islamic parties to four in the 1971 election and then forced these parties into an unstable amalgamation in 1973 to form the United Development Party (PPP). The PPP was gradually stripped of its Islamic symbols and language and also suffered repeated interference from the regime, particularly regarding leadership and legislative candidate lists. Most of the outspoken or ideologically Islamist Muslim politicians were purged from positions of influence within the PPP.

One of the Muslim activists who was deeply aggrieved at these developments was Abdullah Sungkar, the founder and first emir of JI. He had been a member of the Masyumi-affiliated students' movement, GPI, when Masyumi was banned. During the early Soeharto years, he was not only disillusioned with the compliant attitudes to the regime of many mainstream Islamic organizations but also was unable to enter formal politics because his uncompromising Islamism would have attracted the attention of the state security services. Instead, he devoted himself to predication and education with a strong emphasis on promoting trenchant Islamism, such as advocating an Islamic state and the comprehensive implementation of Shari'a—both of which were taboo subjects for the New Order.

In the early 1970s, Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir established the al-Mukmin *pesantren*, which promoted a highly conservative brand of Islam, and both men later joined the underground jihadi movement, Darul Islam, before being arrested and found guilty for subversion. Sungkar's decision to found JI in 1993 was due to a belief that the Soeharto regime was becoming more hostile toward Muslims and that a more militarized form of organization was needed to resist it.

Sidney Jones has argued persuasively that Sungkar's long process of radicalization from the 1960s was due in no small measure to the growing political emasculation of Islam. A natural politician, Sungkar might have carved out his career in a Masyumi-style Islamist party during the 1970s and 1980s had the regime permitted its existence. Instead, he was denied the opportunity to pursue electoral politics and became increasingly angered by the plight of Indonesia's Muslims.

Similar stories can be found elsewhere among Indonesia's radical groups. The secretary-general of the Indonesian Mujahideen Council (MMI), Irfan Awwas, was a political detainee during the early 1990s, and Ja'far Umar Thalib, the military commander of Laskar Jihad, also came from a Masyumi family but eschewed Soeharto-era political Islam, believing that it straight-jacketed Muslims and prevented meaningful advocacy of Islamic causes.

The lifting of political restrictions following the 1998 downfall of the Soeharto regime has led to a proliferation of Islamic parties, some of which are emphatically Islamist. Most of these parties were so small and poorly organized that they failed to meet the criteria to contest the legislative elections in 1999 and 2004. But there are three Islamist parties—the PPP, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), and the Moon and Star Party (PBB)—which have been moderately successful. All three have incorporated some hard-line Islamists into their leadership and parliamentary ranks. Among them are the PKS's Tamsil Linrung, who has been accused of assisting violent jihadists in

Sulawesi, and the PBB's Ahmad Sumargono, who is the former leader of the Islamic solidarity movement, KISDI. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir was courted by the PPP and PBB when first released from jail, but he declined offers to join their boards.

More interestingly, in the past year, there are signs that some members of JI and other jihadi groups may be joining political parties such as the PKS and PBB. Although the numbers are few at this stage, it could indicate that the growing dysfunction with JI is leading members to pursue other options. The impact of small groups of jihadists entering Islamist parties is likely to be negligible in the short term, particularly given the relative unpopularity of Muslim politicians with virulent or sectarian rhetoric. Although such politicians may command support in certain districts, election results and public opinion surveys indicate that there is little mainstream support for them.

This indeed is likely to continue to be the prospect facing radical groups. Indonesia's current democratic system does offer opportunities for a small number of militants, but there is little chance of them gaining the numbers to have much influence on broader legislative and government processes. Some radical Muslim leaders are likely to find politics too limiting a field and can be expected to continue with nonpolitical militant activity. So, democracy may succeed in allowing some voice to radical groups, thereby lessening their sense of hostility or alienation toward the state, but it is unrealistic to expect it to fully tame all of Indonesia's diverse militant Islamists.

6

THE ROLE OF RADICAL MADRASAHS IN TERRORISM: THE INDONESIAN CASE

Scott Atran

Most madrasahs are peaceful and serve a constructive role in societies where education is often a privilege rather than a right, and where, as in Pakistan, the state has increasingly released mass education and student welfare to madrasahs as it continues to spend many times more on the military than on education and welfare.¹ Nevertheless, a small minority of madrasahs have been vitally important in furthering the mission of some of the most volatile terrorist groups. Particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, madrasahs such as al-Mukmin, Lukman al-Hakiem, and al-Islam are closely associated with efforts by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) to attack U.S., Australian, and other Western-related interests. In fact, the majority of JI terrorist attacks outside of the local conflict areas of the Moluccas and Sulawesi—including the Christmas Eve bombings of 2000 and the first Bali attack in 2002, as well as the Jakarta Marriott bombing in 2003 and the Australian embassy attack in 2004 (which involved JI members but was not institutionally JI)—have been staffed and led by individuals associated with radical madrasahs.

To address the madrasah question systematically, data was recently analyzed from the ongoing Global Transnational Terrorism (GTT) Project.² Overall, findings demonstrate that attendance and other forms of association (teaching, socializing, or attending lectures) with JI-linked radical madrasahs are correlated with both participation and role in JI terrorist attacks. Aggregate-level data on Indonesian education rates reveal that JI-linked madrasah attendance rates of the jihadists that took part in the Bali attack in 2002 and the Marriott and Australian embassy bombings are 19 times greater than the highest estimated rates of the general population. An ordered logit statistical analysis of 75 jihadists involved in the same operations shows that JI-linked madrasah attendance is associated with a greater role in JI terrorist operations, decreasing the probability

¹ Even before September 11, the ratio of defense spending to health and education spending in Pakistan was 239 to 1. See Stephen Burgess, “Struggle for Control of Pakistan,” in *Know Thy Enemy: Profiles of Adversary Leaders and Their Strategic Cultures*, ed. Barry Schneider and Jerrold Post, 2nd ed., 85–108 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2003).

² Undertaken in collaboration with Marc Sageman and Jeremy Ginges and under the auspices of the Air Force Office of Scientific Research.

that a jihadist will take a low-level role in a terrorist operation by more than 19 percent and increasing the probability that a jihadist will play a major role by 16 percent.³

Data was also analyzed from structured interviews with more than 100 students in four Indonesian madrasahs (*pesantren*, or boarding schools) to attempt to explain these associations, and striking correlations were found between unusual belief systems and radicalization. Two of the schools, Darussalam and al-Husainy, are associated with the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), or Revival of Islamic Scholars, a mass movement that had originally played a key role in the fight for independence against Dutch rule and that is associated with a traditional and nondogmatic Indonesian form of Islam influenced by Balinese Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sufi mystical beliefs. One school, Ibnu Mas'ud, is funded by the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), or Council of Indonesian Holy Warriors, an Islamist coalition whose goal is to convert Indonesia into a strict Sunni state ruled by Shari'a law.⁴ The remaining school, al-Islam (Tengulun, East Java), was established in 1992 by the father of three of the main Bali bombing plotters (Ali Imron, Amrozi, and Mukhlas) and modeled on the famous al-Mukmin school in Ngruki (Solo, Central Java) created by JI founder Abdullah Sungkar and his colleague Abu Bakr Ba'asyir. After Sungkar's death in 1999, Ba'asyir became al-Islam's patron and officiated at graduation ceremonies. After the Bali bombing, Ba'asyir said that he believed the victims of the bombing would go to hell⁵ and that the bombers and plotters were heroic mujahideen.⁶

Violence and Essentialism Bias

People everywhere tend to attribute hidden essences to human social categories, such as race, ethnicity, and personality. For the most part, they are used to generate notions of “in-group” versus “out-group” based on readily identifiable characteristics, whether physical features (skin color, place of residence, dress) or social and ideational attributes (language, nationality, religion). This is “essentialism bias.”⁷

We explored essentialist attitudes toward Islam and other religions and found no significant differences between the NU and MMI schools, whereas al-Islam stood apart on a variety of measures.⁸ At al-Islam, 91 percent of the students (compared to 35 percent of students at the

³ Justin Magouirk, “Connecting a Thousand Points of Hatred,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31, no. 4: 327–349.

⁴ MMI is led by Abu Bakr Ba'asyir and has a membership that overlaps with but is broader than JI.

⁵ Cited in Indira A.R. Lakshmanan, “Islamic Leader Warns Indonesia,” *Boston Globe*, October 17, 2002.

⁶ Cited in Scott Atran, “The Emir: An interview with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Alleged Leader of the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah Organization,” *Spotlight on Terror* 3, no. 9 (2005).

⁷ Susan A. Gelman and Lawrence A. Hirschfeld, “How Biological Is Essentialism,” in *Folkbiology*, ed. Douglas L. Medin and Scott Atran, 403–446 (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT Press, 2008).

⁸ Median age at NU schools was 16 and 18 at the other schools. Females composed nearly half of the student body at the NU schools, 5 percent at al-Islam, and none at the MMI school. Questionnaires were distributed only to males. Interestingly, at al-Islam, 71 percent of respondents said they joined the school

other madrasahs) believed that it was their duty as Muslims “to fight and kill non-Muslims such as Christians.”⁹ At al-Islam, 74 percent of the students (compared to 7 percent of the students at other schools) believed that all people “were born evil but some learn to become good.”¹⁰ Across all schools, students who believed people are “born evil” were about 11 times more likely to believe it was their duty to kill non-Muslims.¹¹

Students were also asked to imagine what would happen if a child born of Jewish parents were adopted by a religious Muslim couple. While 83 percent of students from other schools thought that the child would grow up to be a Muslim, only 48 percent of students at al-Islam shared that belief.¹² This essentialist belief that a child born of another religion could never fully become a Muslim was strongly related to support for violence. Students with this belief were about 10 times more likely than other students to believe it their duty to kill non-Muslims.¹³ Note that the difference between al-Islam and the other schools cannot be attributed to different levels of religiosity, or even different levels of agreement with political Islam. Fewer students at al-Islam (71 percent compared to 82 percent of students at the other schools) believed it was “very important...that a good government implement the laws of Shari’a” (not a significant difference statistically, $P > 0.4$).

Violent Commitment to Sacred Values: The “Backfire Effect” of Material Incentives

Sacred values differ from material or instrumental values in that they incorporate moral beliefs that drive action in ways dissociated from prospects for success. Across the world, people believe that devotion to essential or core values—such as the welfare of their family and country, or their commitment to religion, honor, and justice—are, or ought to be, absolute and inviolable. Previous research on seemingly intractable conflicts in Palestine and elsewhere suggests that judgment and decisionmaking often involve “sacred” values that are noninstrumental.¹⁴

To test the relation between commitment to sacred values and violence among Indonesian madrasah students, we asked all participants to respond to two slightly different types of deals. Under the first deal (taboo), participants were told that the United States and the European Union would agree to recognize the right of the Muslim Brotherhood to lead the government of

through preexisting social networks of friends, whereas 70 percent of respondents at the other schools were sent there by their family.

⁹ Chi-square = 43.01, $P < 0.0001$.

¹⁰ Chi-square = 38.39, $P < 0.0001$.

¹¹ Wald = 13.042, 95 percent confidence interval (CI) for OR = 2.98 - 39.73, $P = 0.0003$.

¹² Chi-square = 36.166, $P < 0.0001$.

¹³ Wald = 9.139, 95 percent CI for OR = 2.3 - 49.7, $P = 0.003$.

¹⁴ Scott Atran, Robert Axelrod, and Richard Davis, “Sacred Barriers to Conflict Resolution,” *Science* 317 (August 24, 2007): 1039–1040.

Indonesia if elected in a free and fair manner as long as there was agreement that Indonesia would not “be ruled strictly according to Shari’a.” After responding to this deal, participants were asked to respond to a second deal (taboo +) identical to the first except for an added material incentive: “In return the United States and the European Union would give Indonesia a privileged trade agreement, resulting in substantial economic benefits to our people.”

We analyzed support for suicide attacks against the two deals. Added instrumental incentives to compromise over Shari’a backfired: support for violence at all madrasahs was significantly *greater* in response to the deal with the added instrumental incentive.¹⁵ Participants were able to compare taboo and taboo + deals, and thus easily evaluate the instrumental value of the taboo + deal, yet responded more negatively to added instrumental incentive to compromise a sacred value. But this “backfire effect” was significantly greater for the al-Islam sample: students at al-Islam supported violent opposition more than those at the other schools.¹⁶

Radical Madrasahs as “Beehives” of Social Interaction and Terrorist Activity

The more people use essentialist thinking, the stronger their preference to interact only with those who share the sacred values that define group identity. The social networks over which such thinking and values operate tend to become internally active “beehives” of friendship and cooperation that are highly hostile and competitive with outside groups that do not share their ideology and values. Thus, another expected finding is that radical madrasahs in Southeast Asia are not only hotbeds of radical ideas and values but also socially interactive “focal points” that draw like-minded radicals together, a point often missed by terrorism analysts.

An analysis of all JI-related attacks shows that association with a JI-linked radical madrasah is a strong predictor of a jihadist’s role in terrorist operations. Radical madrasahs have provided operatives for every major JI attack outside of the strictly local conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Ambon and Poso.¹⁷ Most of the Bali attackers and planners either attended or were associated with one of three JI-linked radical schools—al-Mukmin, al-Islam, or Lukman al-Hakim—and similar radical madrasah representation in other JI attacks indicates that the radical madrasah factor is not an isolated phenomenon or one restricted to “unimportant” regional conflicts.¹⁸ For example, association with Lukman al-Hakim, a radical JI madrasah in Malaysia, increases the probability that a jihadi will play a major role by more than 23 percent. In brief, it

¹⁵ $F(1, 76) = 19.35, P < .001$

¹⁶ $F(1, 76) = 7.43, P = .008$

¹⁷ There were more attacks in Poso between 2003 and 2006 than in the rest of Indonesia combined. None of the perpetrators went to JI schools.

¹⁸ Justin Magouirk and Scott Atran, “Jemaah Islamiyah’s Radical Madrasah Network,” *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 1, issue 1 (2008): 25–41.

can be surmised that JI-linked radical madrasahs are both production sites and service centers for jihadists.

Figure 1. JI Bomb Plotters Associated with al-Mukmin Pesantren (Madrasah Founded in 1970s by JI Sungkar and Ba'asyir)

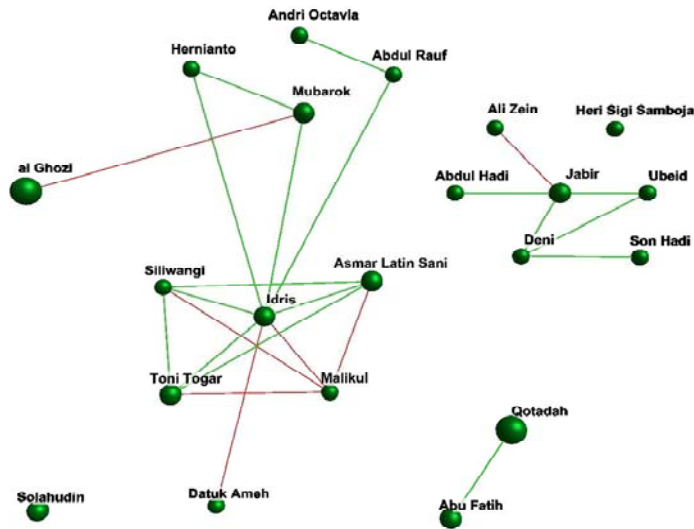
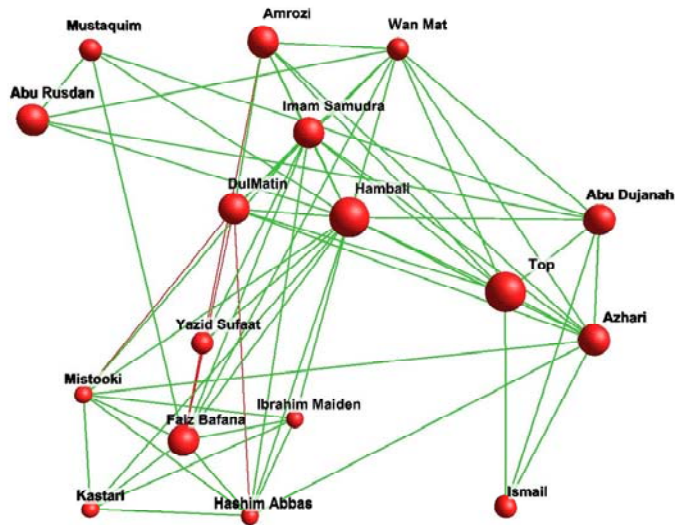


Figure 2. JI Bomb Plotters Associated with Lumkan al-Hakiem Pesantren (Madrasah Established in the 1990s by JI Leaders in Exile in Malaysia)



7

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA AND THE ROLE OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC NETWORKS

Muhammad Najib Azca

Communal Violence in Indonesia

Indonesia witnessed the mushrooming of communal violence during the early stages of its transition toward electoral democracy after the fall of Soeharto's authoritarian regime in 1998.¹ Of these, the religious conflicts in Ambon, Maluku (which began in January 1999), and Poso, Central Sulawesi (which began in December 1998) have been the most massive, severe, and protracted. During the violent and deadly conflicts between Muslims and Christians in these two areas, thousands of people were killed and wounded and thousands of houses, offices, and religious buildings were destroyed.

One of the critical features of both conflicts was the remarkable involvement of nonlocal Muslim fighters, or jihadists, from regions of the country outside the conflict zones themselves. The massive influx of nonlocal jihadists began in April to May 2000 in Maluku and June to July 2000 in Poso. Features of the jihadists in the two areas were also different; Laskar Jihad went predominantly to Maluku, while Laskar Mujahideen went to Poso. Both conflicts have become known as the "academy of jihadists." As a result of this name, the title "alumni of Ambon-Maluku" and "alumni of Poso" have become commonplace among the participant jihadists. In addition to the nonlocal Indonesian jihadists, these conflicts also attracted some foreign fighters. Thus, to a certain extent, the conflicts became arenas for global jihadists.

Laskar Jihad and Laskar Mujahideen

Among the nonlocal jihadists were two large groups, namely Laskar Jihad and Laskar Mujahideen.² Laskar Jihad was the most well-known and largest Muslim militia group and

¹ Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeeddin, "Anatomy of Social Violence in the Context of Transition: The Case of Indonesia 1990–2001" (working paper, United Nations Support Facility for Indonesian Recovery, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2002); Ashutosh Varshney, Rizal Panggabean, and Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeeddin, "Pattern of Collective Violence in Indonesia (1990–2003)" (working paper, United Nations Support Facility for Indonesian Recovery, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2004); Gerry Van Klinken, *Communal Violence and Democratization in Indonesia: Small Town Wars* (London: Routledge, 2007).

² While Laskar Jihad is a single group, the so-called Laskar Mujahideen consists of several militia groups that are linked to different movements, such as KOMPAK (Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisis),

recruited thousands of members. It operated in somewhat overt ways, and its members wore an Arabic style of dress. It was estimated that this group mobilized approximately 10,000 people during the conflict, most of who went to Ambon. Although the group's main members and supporters were either locals or from other parts of Indonesia, it maintained a transnational image and global links due to its notorious leader, Ja'far Umar Thalib, a young scholar who was a veteran of the Afghanistan war. In tandem with Thalib's close relationship with the military, the group retained a nationalistic character and ideology in as much as it saw the conflict as a struggle against a "Christian separatist" movement in Maluku. Christian rhetoric attacking the very existence of NKRI (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia—the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia) reinforced this perspective of the conflict.

Another group that was not as well known as Laskar Jihad was Laskar Mujahideen. This group recruited hundreds of people, operated in more covert ways (by not wearing similar clothing, for example) and was characterized by a rather strong transnational identity and ideology. Though some of its members explicitly promoted the implementation of Islamic law—either at the national or local level—the discourse involving NKRI was used less frequently. Laskar Mujahideen had much better training and equipment than Laskar Jihad. In fact, some members of Laskar Mujahideen had previously trained and fought in other war zones, such as Afghanistan and Mindanao.³

It was evident that the two groups used both domestic and foreign networks to conduct their operations. Though Laskar Jihad was known for its success in mobilizing thousands of Indonesians to participate in jihad, the group based its foundation on "foreign authorities," in this case, fatwas made by leading Islamic scholars from the Middle East such as Muqbil Ibn Hadi al Wadi, a *mufti* in Yemen, Rabi Ibn Hadi al Madkhali, a *mufti* in Saudi Arabia, and Wahid al Jabiri, a *mufti* in Medina. It is also important to note that the emergence of Salafi movements in Indonesia—which played a key role in the formation of Laskar Jihad—took place in the context of an aggressive global campaign by Saudi Salafi movements, which received support from the Saudi government. This assistance included generous philanthropic support intended to extend the network into the archipelago.⁴

DI/NII (Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia), JI (Jamaah Islamiyah), Hidayatullah, KPPSI (Komite Persiapan Penagakan Syariat Islam), etc. Although there are differences between Laskar Jihad and Laskar Mujahideen, they share some commonalities and at times worked together. However, tensions between the two groups were not infrequent.

³ Muhammad Najib Azca, "The Role of the Security Forces in Communal Conflict: The Case of Ambon, Indonesia" (master's thesis, Australian National University, 2003); International Crisis Group, "Weakening Indonesia's Mujahidin Network: Lessons from Maluku and Poso," Asia Report 103 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, October 13, 2005); Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁴ Noorhaidi Hasan, "Faith and Politics: The Rise of the Laskar Jihad in the Era of Transition in Indonesia," *Indonesia* 73 (April 2002): 149–169.

Although Laskar Mujahideen attracted less people than Laskar Jihad, the group succeeded in attracting some foreign jihadists to Indonesia, including the notorious jihadi Omar Faruk. The jihadi group that carried out the Bali bombing, the bombings of the Marriot Hotel, and the bombing of the Australian embassy had links to Laskar Mujahideen. In other words, this group was more amenable to using violence in order to achieve its goals. Though Laskar Mujahideen only gained limited support domestically, it was quite successful at using the communal conflict to develop its network more broadly.

These Networks and the Threat Today

The communal conflicts in Ambon and Poso spread and cultivated the seeds of violence among certain Indonesian Muslims. This phenomenon was obviously more acute among the veterans of the jihad. These conflicts also brought about changes in the nature of the transnational threats confronting Indonesia. A series of bombings and other terrorist acts have taken place in the archipelago following these conflicts. Examples include the first Bali bombing (2002), the Marriot Hotel (2003), the Australian embassy (2004), and the second Bali bombing (2005). Though the individuals involved in terrorist actions within Indonesia did not necessarily participate in the communal conflict in Ambon and Poso, these conflicts have nonetheless been instrumental in facilitating the expansion and development of Islamist networks.

This is not to say that all actors involved in communal conflicts pose a danger to Indonesian security. Indeed, those who were previously linked or affiliated with Laskar Jihad would be less likely to pose such a threat. Though this group is very conservative and, to a certain extent, its members reject modernization in their social, economic, and political lives, it perceives the Indonesian state as legitimate. Thus, perpetrating acts that violate state law, from their point of view, would mean breaking Islamic law.

Another factor that makes Laskar Jihad affiliates less of a danger today is that their involvement in communal conflict required a fatwa from a respected Islamic scholar in the Middle East. Thus, the group is tied and subject to established religious authority, especially within the Wahhabi movement. Because these scholars are basically politically conservative and pro-status quo with respect to the regional power structure, their authority, in this case, is a stabilizing factor. Or, as eloquently suggested by the International Crisis Group, “salafism may be more of a barrier to the expansion of jihadist activities than a facilitator.”⁵

Internal disputes among affiliates of the Laskar Jihad network also diminish the contemporary threat posed by these individuals. In the aftermath of conflict in Ambon and Poso, there was criticism from certain members of Laskar Jihad over the role that the organization had played.

⁵ International Crisis Group, “Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Don’t Mix,” Asia Report 83 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, September 13, 2004).

One of the key issues that the group debated was the urgency of staying away from politics, particularly mob politics.⁶ Leaders of the group have also strongly condemned terrorism and have become embroiled in a bitter fight with the pro-terrorism camp.⁷ In short, an imminent and direct threat from Laskar Jihad is unlikely.

Those involved in the Laskar Mujahideen network, on the other hand, are much more of a potential threat to Indonesia. We should be careful, however, to distinguish the different attitudes and ideologies within this loose network, as their dissimilarities are quite obvious. For example, it is unfair and inaccurate to assume that there are no differences between JI and KOMPAK (Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisis)—though they share some commonalities and sometimes work together in the field. It is also an oversimplification to see JI as a single terrorist group in light of recent reports concerning the internal tensions and factions within it.

The case of the May 16, 2005, attack on a paramilitary police post in Ceram shows how a disparate group of men linked through various networks (KOMPAK, Darul Islam, a Poso-based organization, and perhaps JI) can come together and form a team of operatives. This episode reveals that common experiences of training and fighting during the early stages of the Poso and Maluku conflicts could function as the organizing principle for terrorist action.⁸

To sum up, it is quite fair to say that people who are linked to Laskar Mujahideen are potentially more amenable to using violence and perpetrating acts of terror than those affiliated with Laskar Jihad. Although Laskar Jihad is closely tied to the established Wahhabi authority based in the Middle East, the rejection by several elements of Laskar Mujahideen toward established Islamic

⁶ Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, “Rujuk kepada kebenaran adalah ciri ahlus-sunnah” [Back to the truth is the character of ahlus-sunnah], in *Meredam amarah terhadap pemerintah: menyikapi kejahatan penguasa menurut al-Qur’an dan as-sunnah* [Restraining anger toward government: responding to the ruler’s offence According to al-Qur’an and as-sunnah], ed. Sheikh Abu ‘Abdirrahman Fauzi Al-Atsari (Pekalongan, Indo.: Pustaka Sumayyah, 2006).

⁷ Imam Samudra, one of the perpetrators of the first Bali bombing, published a semiautobiography, *Aku melawan teroris* [I fight against terrorists] (Solo, Indo.: Jazera, 2004), revealing his personal stories in joining the jihad movement and explaining several reasons why actions such as bombing are justifiable against the global hegemony of Christians and Jews. In a reply to Samudra’s book, Al Ustad Luqman bin Muhammad Ba’abduh wrote a book entitled, *Mereka adalah teroris, sebuah tinjauan syariat* [They are terrorists, an Islamic law perspective] (Jakarta: Pustaka Qaulan Sadida, 2005). This thick book (748 pages) describes the fallacies of Imam Samudra and friends who conduct bombings in the name of Islam and why such actions are unjustifiable from the point of view of Islamic law. Ba’abduh was a field commander of Laskar Jihad in Ambon, while Samudra was a jihadist in Ambon. Ba’abduh’s book was then addressed by another book, Abduh Zulfidar Akaha, *Siapa teroris? siapa khawarij?* [Who are terrorists? Who is khawarij?] (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2006).

⁸ See reports by the International Crisis Group, especially “Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks: Lessons from Maluku and Poso,” Asia Report 103 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, October 13, 2005); and “Terrorism in Indonesia: Noordin’s Network Published,” Asia Report 114 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, May 5, 2006).

authorities makes it potentially more likely to establish links with newer, radical forces such as al Qaeda.

8

RADICAL ISLAM IN MALAYSIA

Joseph Chinyong Liow

Malaysia appears to be an oasis of calm against a backdrop of violence and conflict referenced along religious lines by Muslim groups in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. Several factors account for this. First, Malaysian tactical security operations against Muslim militancy, spearheaded by a highly competent internal security apparatus, have proven very effective. Second, unlike the situation in Thailand and the Philippines, Muslims are the demographic majority in Malaysia. Third, the regime in Malaysia has permitted—indeed facilitated—an enormous degree of penetration by Islamic forces into mainstream society, thereby undercutting the argument, often made by militant Muslim groups, that the government is in fact “not Islamic enough” and in bed with “*kafir*” forces.

That said, the socioreligious climate in Malaysia has also seen Islam become increasingly radical in its fundamentalism and conservatism. Given the trajectory and pace of state-driven Islamization in Malaysia in the past 20 years, this phenomenon will undoubtedly have significant impact on a country that has a sizeable non-Muslim minority. Far beyond the question of the presence or absence of terrorist groups in Malaysia, this phenomenon threatens to fundamentally transform the norms and configuration of Malaysian society.

The Malaysian government has had a long track record of encounters with militancy and terrorism within its borders, which it often highlights to draw attention to its extensive “experience” in fighting violent antigovernment extremists. Although the Communist insurgency remains by far the most cited and scrutinized, the Malaysian state also has extensive experience dealing with militancy and extremism that claim religious justification. Operations against an array of extremist groups indicate that even before September 11, 2001, the Malaysian government was already sensitized to the threat of Muslim militancy and was taking it seriously.

Following the discovery of terrorist cells in the country in 2000, the Malaysian government moved to deal with the threat of Muslim militancy on the domestic frontier with impressive efficiency and effectiveness, at least from an operational perspective. Extremists suspected of being associated with the Al Ma’unah and Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia (KMM) organizations were swiftly rounded up over a series of security operations. The Malaysian Special Branch proved to be an instrumental component of the regional counterterrorism intelligence network that exposed JI and later its connections with al Qaeda, tracked down members of the organization, and foiled potential attacks. The Internal Security Act was employed as a decisive counterterrorism policy instrument against militants identified via state-sanctioned surveillance.

Another successful component to Malaysia's operational strategy against terrorism has been its commitment to multilateral cooperation initiatives. The Malaysian government signed an antiterrorism pact with Indonesia and the Philippines in May 2002. Similar agreements were signed with Australia and the United States, the latter as part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Malaysia is also part of the Five Power Defense Agreement whose members pledged to reorientate their 32-year-old security pact to counter international terrorism more effectively.

The Malaysian government's operational actions against Islamic extremists and radicals, however, are but one dimension of a complex relationship among religion, the state, and Malaysian society. While the government is identifying and clamping down on extremists and radicals—including some rather dubious accusations and “evidence” against members of the Islamist opposition—the regime has simultaneously encouraged, facilitated, and enhanced the role of the Muslim religious establishment in Malaysian society, the judiciary, and public life in general. For example, state-sanctioned *ulama* have come to assume prominent roles in various institutions, through which they have been empowered to govern various aspects of Malaysian intellectual, cultural, and social life, not to mention the media and education system. While deploying the vast surveillance and coercive apparatus at its disposal to demonize and demobilize Islamic political opposition, the regime has permitted—indeed, facilitated—a remarkable degree of penetration by the conservative Muslim clergy into the institutions of the state.

At first glance, these two facets to the Malaysian government's dealings with Islamic social and political forces appear contradictory. In reality, however, they are intimately related. Recognizing the utility and potency of Islamic symbols, the state has allowed the conservative Islamic clergy to play an active role in national affairs in order to bolster its own power and credentials. Rather than head off oppositionist Islamic forces with a turn to secularism, democratization, and “liberal Islam,” the state has in fact mobilized Islam not only to shore up its credentials and support base but also to undercut the opposition.

The state-sanctioned clerics who address the public in government mosques and who run the inflated religious bureaucracy through the *Jabatan Agama Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* (the Islamic development department of Malaysia) are more often than not highly conservative in their outlook. In some instances, they have proven more critical (at times, vocally and animatedly) of the pluralism of values and lifestyles in Malaysia today than some segments of the Islamist opposition. In other words, many of the clerics who have state endorsement are more “radical” in their efforts to bring Malaysia into conformity with a conservative and rigid interpretation of Islamic law while they castigate alternative expressions of Islamic religiosity and spirituality, not to mention legal opinions, as “deviant.”

The net effect of this is that the government has inadvertently fostered an increasingly conservative religio-intellectual environment. Such an environment precipitates conditions that allow for narrow interpretations to surface and garner appeal in a manner that threatens to unravel the erstwhile pluralist character of the country's social-cultural underpinnings.

9

GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES TO EXTREMISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: “HARD” VERSUS “SOFT” APPROACHES

*Kumar Ramakrishna*¹

Since the September 11, 2001, al Qaeda attacks in the United States and particularly after the al Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) bombing of nightspots in Bali on October 12, 2002—a massive strike that killed 202 people, mainly Australian tourists—Southeast Asia has been regarded as the so-called second front in the Global War on Terror. In fact, it became clear even before the Bali strikes that JI—which was rooted in the older Darul Islam separatist movement in West and Central Java in particular—is, like al Qaeda, a transnational network, and at one point comprised of regional commands, or *mantiqi*, governing the operations of cells in different Southeast Asian countries.²

Since Bali, Southeast Asian governments have made significant progress in disrupting terrorist networks in their countries, with particular emphasis on JI and other splinter groups. Until fairly recently, the emphasis had been largely on the employment of intelligence-driven “hard” law enforcement operations aimed at targeting individual militant leaders and cell members and disrupting their funding and logistics pipelines. More recently, however, regional governments have become more cognizant of the need to be tough not just on terrorism per se but on the sources of terrorism as well, so to speak, and there has been a complementary focus on “softer” approaches seeking to neutralize the religious extremism that nourishes the likes of JI and similar groups.

This brief assessment offers an analytical overview of both hard and soft governmental responses to extremism in Southeast Asia. Due to reasons of space, the assessment focuses on the following three countries that would provide useful insight into the range and variety of governmental counterextremism responses across the region: Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Indonesia

Against the backdrop of the Bali attacks of October 2002 and follow-up JI strikes on the Marriott Hotel in August 2003, the Australian embassy in September 2004, and a second smaller but still

¹ The author would like to gratefully acknowledge the research assistance of Nurfahaslinda Ismail and Jennifer Yang Hui in the preparation of this submission.

² The *mantiqis* and their subdivisions have usually been described as a territorially based administrative structure. Thus, the *mantiqis* were equivalent to regions, *wakalah* to districts, and *fiah* to cells.

lethal Bali bombing in 2005, the Indonesian government felt compelled to act. One of the first significant hard counterterrorism measures implemented was the establishment of Special Detachment 88 (Detasemen Khusus 88 or Delta 88), which is the counterterrorism unit of the Indonesian National Police. Detachment 88 was funded, equipped, and trained by the United States.³ Detachment 88 has also received technical assistance from the Australian Federal Police in forensic sciences, including DNA analysis, as well as communications monitoring. Within Indonesia, the Armed Forces Strategic Intelligence Agency (BAIS) has assisted Detachment 88 in keeping track of the JI network within and beyond Indonesia.⁴

It is no exaggeration to note that Detachment 88 has been instrumental in mitigating the physical threat of terrorism in Indonesia. Apart from the elimination of senior JI bomb maker and Malaysian national Dr. Azhari Husin in November 2005 and a successful counter-JI operation in Poso, Central Sulawesi, in January 2007, Detachment 88's most significant achievement to date has been the June 2007 arrests of Abu Dujana and Zarkasih, both senior operational leaders of JI. In April 2008, both men received 15-year jail terms, while JI was at the same time declared a "terrorist organization"—the first such ruling by an Indonesian court.⁵

Another important hard measure was the creation of the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) in February 2004. Located within the grounds of the Indonesian National Police Academy (AKPOL) in Semarang in Central Java, JCLEC is a joint venture between the Indonesian and Australian governments. Australia has committed AU\$36.8 million to support JCLEC operations until 2009.⁶ The aim of JCLEC is to be a resource for Southeast Asian governments in the fight against transnational crime and terrorism. To this end, JCLEC coordinates and facilitates a range of capacity-building programs, seminars, and workshops. JCLEC works closely with law enforcement agencies in the region as well as the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism (SEARCCT) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok, Thailand.

By far the most significant soft governmental response to extremism has been religious rehabilitation work in Indonesian prisons—a problem that arose from the commingling of jihadi detainees with ordinary prisoners. The Indonesian police have co-opted ex-militants to preach moderate Islam to newly arrested militants and other susceptible inmates.⁷ Interestingly, within Indonesia ex-JI militant leaders like Nasir Abbas are regarded as possessing the personal

³ Allan Nairn, "Detachment 88, Kopassus Get Covert US Aid: US Intelligence Personnel Tap Indonesian Phones," *Intelligence Daily*, December 13, 2007, <http://www.inteldaily.com/?c=169&a=4556>.

⁴ Ingo W., "Indonesia's New Intelligence Agency. How?, Why?, and What For?," *Watch Indonesia!* no.1, (November 1, 2000), <http://home.snafu.de/watchin/BIN.html>.

⁵ "Key Indonesian Militants Jailed," BBC News, April 21, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7358165.stm>.

⁶ See the JCLEC Web site, <http://www.jclec.com/>.

⁷ International Crisis Group, *Deradicalisation and Indonesian Prisons*, Asia Report 142 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, November 19, 2007).

credibility needed to turn inmates away from the JI path. The detainee rehabilitation program has been in place since November 2007. Despite positive feedback in some official circles, it cannot as yet be judged an unequivocal success.

Singapore

In Singapore, hard governmental measures have focused on the employment of the Internal Security Act (ISA), administered by the Internal Security Department (ISD), which confers on the government the legal power to detain individuals without trial if they are regarded by duly constituted public authorities as a clear and present danger to national security.⁸ Under the ISA, 15 alleged JI members were arrested in December 2001 for involvement in the Singapore embassies attack plot. From August to September 2002, another 21 alleged members of JI were arrested under the ISA. The use of the ISA has all but disrupted JI's physical striking potential in Singapore.⁹ Some sources indicate that in the six years since 2002, 73 individuals have been detained for terrorism-related activity.¹⁰

However, in Singapore it is recognized that hard measures against terrorism need to be complemented by soft measures directed at the sources of the religious extremism that fuel JI. Such soft measures have been employed at both governmental and nongovernmental levels. The primary governmental tool has been the Community Engagement Programme (CEP), which was initiated to bring "together people from different communities in Singapore to work with each other to develop understanding and to prevent and minimize radical and religious tensions in our society (Singapore) after a crisis, such as a terrorist incident."¹¹

The CEP recognizes the need to involve as many sections of society as possible. Hence, the Ministerial Committee on Community Engagement (MCCE) was formed to spearhead the CEP project and seek the involvement of a number of ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Home Affairs; Ministry of Community Development, Youth, and Sports (MCYS); Ministry of Education; Ministry of Information, Communications, and the Arts; Ministry of Manpower; and the Peoples' Association. Another governmental initiative introduced soon after the 9/11 attacks was the Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCCs) at the grassroots level. IRCCs come under the rubric of MCYS, which has worked "closely with more than 1,000 religious

⁸ The legislation originated in the wake of World War II, when a number of countries around the world introduced legislation that severely curtailed the rights of known or suspected Communists.

⁹ For details on the 2001 Singapore plot, see Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs, *The Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism*, white paper (Singapore: Ministry of Home Affairs, January 2003), http://www.mha.gov.sg/publication_details.aspx?pageid=35&cid=354.

¹⁰ Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Ellie B. Hearne, *Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism* (New York: International Peace Institute, October 2008), 9.

¹¹ *Singapore United*, <http://www.singaporeunited.sg/cep>.

organizations to bring them under the fold of the 84 IRCCs located islandwide.”¹² The IRCCs were formed to ensure that the interreligious communications channels and harmony would not be rended asunder by international events.

Important soft responses to extremism have been undertaken by Singapore’s Muslim community leaders as well. Organizations such as the government-linked Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) as well as the nongovernmental Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG), several mosques, and Muslim organizations have come together to assist in arranging numerous talks and programs targeted primarily at vulnerable youth. This effort seeks to help young Singaporean Muslims understand and clarify issues pertaining to global affairs and their faith amid the tumultuous context of the Global War on Terror. In this respect, a most important role is being played by the RRG, made up of an all-volunteer group of moderate Muslim scholars, which was originally constituted to counsel the JI detainees as part of a comprehensive rehabilitation effort also involving ISD case officers as well as Ministry of Home Affairs psychologists.¹³

In recent years, the RRG has expanded its efforts to mitigate religious extremism in the wider community through public talks, forums, publications, and the establishment of a Web site to debunk extremist ideology.¹⁴ The RRG Web site serves as an effective tool for public education as it provides readers access to a wide range of scholarly publications, news articles, and media interviews that focus on effective responses to extremism. Another soft approach of some significance is the Inter-Agency Aftercare Group (ACG), which “focuses on the welfare of the families of detainees.”¹⁵ The ACG was initiated in 2002 by five groups: Mendaki, the volunteer organization Taman Bacaan, the community self-help group Association of Muslim Professionals, the Khadijah Mosque, and En Naeem Mosque.¹⁶

Malaysia

In Malaysia, hard counterextremism measures essentially revolve, as in the case of its southern neighbor, Singapore, around the Internal Security Act (ISA), which serves as a preventive detention law. According to the respected observer of Southeast Asian terrorism, Zachary Abuza, 115 suspected radical Islamist militants were detained under the ISA from mid-2001 until 2007. JI

¹² Sumathi Selvaretnam, “Religious Groups Roped into IRCCs,” *Straits Times* (Singapore), September 7, 2007, <http://www.singaporeunited.sg/cep/index.php/web/layout/set/print/content/view/full/1670>.

¹³ For more details, see Ustaz Mohamed Feisal bin Mohamed Hassan, “The Roles of the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) in Singapore,” in *Fighting Terrorism: The Singapore Perspective*, ed. Abdul Halim bin Kader (Singapore: Taman Bacaan, 2007), 149–160.

¹⁴ See the Religious Rehabilitation Group Web site at <http://www.rrg.sg>.

¹⁵ Jeremy Au Yong, “Care Group for Families of JI Detainees Lauded,” *Straits Times* (Singapore), November 14, 2007, <http://www.singaporeunited.sg/cep/index.php/malay/Sajian-Berita/DPM-Wong-Kan-Seng-s-comments-at-tea-reception-for-the-Inter-Agency-Aftercare-Committee>.

¹⁶ Hassan, “The Roles of the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) in Singapore.”

members form the majority of these detainees, and some sources report that more than 60 JI members currently remain in detention.¹⁷

It should also be noted that while Singapore has its ISD and Indonesia its crack counterterrorist Detachment 88 police unit, Malaysia does boast a hard counterterrorist strike capability in the form of its Special Operations Force (SOF). The SOF is a multiservice force consisting of the 10 Paratrooper Brigade, Grup Gerak Khas (GGK), Pasukan Khas Laut (PASKAL), Pasukan Khas Udara (PASKAU), Pasukan Gerakan Khas (PGK), and a newly created police maritime special forces unit known as Unit Selam Tempur (UST).¹⁸

In addition, the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counterterrorism (SEARCCT) was set up with U.S. assistance to promote counterterrorism capacity building in the region. A typical activity conducted by SEARCCT was a financial counterterrorism training workshop it hosted in August 2003, which emphasized the need for international cooperation to interdict terrorist financing.¹⁹

It would be fair to assert, however, that, like Singapore (if perhaps less so than Indonesia), soft governmental-led responses to extremism—essentially a “combined *dakwah* (missionary effort) with an Islamization program and rehabilitation of militants”—are the key focus in Malaysia.²⁰ In fact, details of the Malaysian detainee rehabilitation program are hard to come by due to official secrecy. However, some information has recently emerged: unlike the Indonesian program, ex-militants are not involved in talking to current detainees, who tend to see the former as traitors. Instead, university lecturers regarded by detainees as knowledgeable on Islam are preferred, as well as, to a lesser extent, religious clerics from the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim) or state religious departments. Family members are also called on to appeal to detainees to turn over a new leaf—as in Singapore²¹ and Saudi Arabia.²² Some sources report that over the years, more than 400 JI members, 13 members of JI’s Pakistan-based Al Ghuraba cell, 30 JI-linked Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia (KMM) members, and 15 members of the cultish but violent Al Maunah sect²³ have been “rehabilitated.”²⁴

¹⁷ Santha Oorjitham, “Persuading Terrorists to ‘Disengage,’” *New Sunday Times* (Malaysia), October 5, 2008.

¹⁸ Oley Amir Sarifudin “Unit Selam Tempur—Miliki Kemahiran ala Komando,” *Utusan Malaysia*, July 28, 2008, http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/arkib.asp?y=2008&dt=0728&pub=utusan_malaysia&sec=polis%5F%26%5Ftentera&pg=te_01.htm&arc=hive.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2003/31611.htm>.

²⁰ Oorjitham, “Persuading Terrorists to ‘Disengage.’”

²¹ Zakir Hussain, “Reforming JI Detainees Remains a ‘Long Struggle,’” in *Fighting Terrorism* (see note 53), 188–190.

²² Fink and Hearne, *Beyond Terrorism*, 7.

²³ For details of the Al Maunah sect, see “Death Penalty for Three Malaysians,” BBC News, December 28, 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1731503.stm>.

²⁴ Oorjitham, “Persuading Terrorists to ‘Disengage.’”

It would appear that the focus of religious rehabilitation of jihadi detainees in Malaysia is to emphasize the renunciation of violence rather than outright ideological conversion—in short, “disengagement” rather than “deradicalization,” so to speak.²⁵ This disengagement focus, to some extent, is also true of the Indonesian and Singaporean rehabilitation programs. In all three cases, intellectual and theological counterarguments regarding interpretations of jihad and the Islamic state, coupled with socioeconomic, educational, and vocational assistance to the families of detainees, are deemed important to a holistic approach to detainee rehabilitation. The influence—to varying degrees—of the Yemeni and Saudi rehabilitation approaches on Malaysian, Singaporean, and Indonesian thinking on soft detainee rehabilitation approaches can thus be discerned.²⁶

Conclusion

Overall, while there are certainly commonalities in the hard and soft governmental responses to violent religious extremism in the three Southeast Asian countries surveyed, subtle differences—particularly revolving around the soft approach of religious rehabilitation—are apparent. This reiterates the importance of crafting counterextremism strategies customized to suit national historical and cultural contexts. Terrorism fueled by religious extremism may remain a global phenomenon, but in Southeast Asia, as elsewhere, it has deep local roots that can by no means be ignored.

²⁵ Ibid. On the distinction between disengagement as a behavioral change and deradicalization as a more profound “cognitive shift,” see Fink and Hearne, *Beyond Terrorism*, 3.

²⁶ Fink and Hearne, *Beyond Terrorism*, 8–9.

10

THE MALAYU INSURGENCY IN THAILAND'S SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES

Sunai Phasuk

For more than a century, there have been varying degrees of separatist activity rooted in the distinctive religious, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and historical traits of Thailand's southern border provinces.¹ The context for resistance and insurgency has been based largely on three ideological foundations: the belief in traditional virtues and the greatness of the Patani Darulsalam (Islamic land of Patani), the Malay ethnic identification, and a religious orientation based on Islam.

Since January 2004, the southern border provinces have been the scene of unprecedented violence and brutality as a result of the new surge of separatist insurgency led by the Barisan Revolusi Nasional–Koordinas (National Revolution Front–Coordinate, BRN-Coordinate)² and fueled by the heavy-handed counterinsurgency operations of Thai authorities. The violence has resulted in more than 3,800 deaths and 4,000 injuries. Civilian casualties constitute nearly 90 percent of this total.

The Insurgents and Their Motives

While many groups and ideologies are involved, *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* (Patani freedom fighters), in the loose network of BRN-Coordinate, has emerged as the backbone of the new generation of separatist militants.³ Thai authorities have estimated that these separatist militants are active in about two-thirds of the 1,574 villages across the southern border provinces.

The indoctrination, recruitment, and expansion of BRN-Coordinate's political and military activity over the past two decades have been carried out primarily through a wide network of religious teachers, schools, and students using the potent combination of radical ethnic Malay nationalism and Islamist extremism. Most of the expansion of BRN-Coordinate during this

¹ In this paper, references to Thailand's southern border provinces mean the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, plus the districts of Jana, Thepa, Saba Yoi, and Na Thawi in Songkhla Province, in which the majority of the population is ethnic Malay Muslim, who speak a local dialect of the Malay language. This region constituted independent Muslim sultanates before being annexed by Thailand (then Siam) in 1902.

² The Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) operates in a loose alliance with BRN-Coordinate but focuses its activities on the political front from overseas.

³ For details, see Human Rights Watch, *No One Is Safe: Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces* (New York: Human Rights Watch, August 2007), <http://hrw.org/reports/2007/thailand0807/>.

period took place under the spiritual leadership of Sapae-ing Baso (owner of Thamma Witthaya Foundation School in Yala Province) and the coordination of Masae Useng (secretary in the PUSAKA foundation, which represented the network of elementary Koranic schools or *tadika* in Narathiwat Province).⁴

According to documents seized from Masae Useng's house by Thai authorities, the resurgence and expansion of BRN-Coordinate has been focused since 1997 on a distinctly Islamist nationalist platform, known as the "seven-step plan":⁵

1. Creating public awareness of Islam (religion), Malay (nationality) and Patani homeland, invasion/occupation [by the Thai state], and the struggle for independence;
2. Creating mass support through religious teaching [at various levels, including *tadika*, *ponoh*, private Islamic colleges, and provincial Islamic committees];
3. Setting up a secretive organizational structure;
4. Recruiting and training [ethnic Malay Muslim] youth to become militants, aiming to have a 3,000-strong force of well-trained and well-disciplined troops;
5. Building nationalist and pro-independence ideology among government officials [of ethnic Malay Muslim origin] and ethnic Malay Muslims [of the southern border provinces] who went to work in Malaysia;
6. Launching a new wave of attacks;
7. Declaring a revolution.

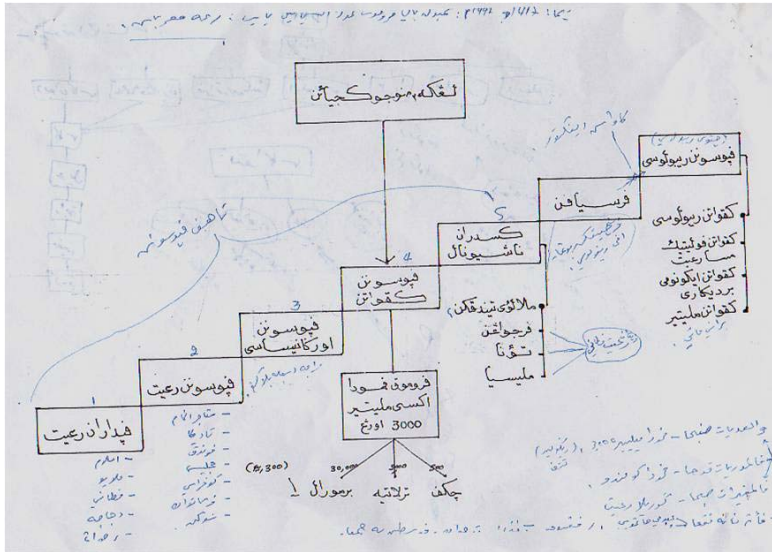
Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani believe that all ethnic Malay Muslims in the southern border provinces are obliged to fulfill their *wajib* (Islamic obligation) to fight and liberate their homeland from what they call an occupation by Siamese *kafir* (referring to the Thai state and Buddhist Thais as infidels). For the first time in the history of insurgency in Thailand's southern border provinces, Buddhist Thais have become the target of ethnic cleansing campaigns. Such ideological radicalization has been used by *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* to attack Buddhist Thai civilians and every symbol of the Thai state—such as schools, temples, hospitals, and infrastructure. Victims are shot (both in indiscriminate drive-by shootings and targeted assassinations), hacked with machetes, burned to death, or blown up in bomb attacks. Their houses are torched, and fruit orchards and rubber plantations destroyed. Calling the southern border provinces *darul harbi*

⁴ Though more is beginning to be learned about BRN-Coordinate and *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani*, information about their leadership and organizational structure is limited largely to the field level. Apart from Sapae-ing Baso and Masae Useng, the identity of their top decision makers for political and military operations remains enigmatic. It is also not clear that there even exists an overall leadership capable of controlling the various factions of *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani*.

⁵ Human Rights Watch, *No One Is Safe: Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces*.

(land of religious war), *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* say they must fight until they win full independence from the Thai state. Negotiation or any other form of compromise is regarded as a serious act of treason to their ideological beliefs.

Figure 3. A Handwritten Note Showing the Seven-step Plan from Masae Useng’s House⁶



Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani have also increasingly unleashed terror against their own constituency. Since 2004, there have been numerous attacks on ethnic Malay Muslims accused of being *munafiq* (hypocrites) or traitors who have committed *haram* (forbidden sins) by collaborating with Thai authorities or opposing the insurgency.

Responses by Thai Authorities

Although the militants have claimed the moral high ground for their struggle because of historical and contemporary grievances, their tactics are anything but moral—and their behavior undermines their claims to legitimacy. In particular, the deliberate use of violence and terror by *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* as a means of control has alienated the ethnic Malay Muslim population.

This trend should have been exploited more effectively by Thai authorities as the basis of sociopolitical operations to “win the hearts and minds” of the majority of ethnic Malay Muslims, who still want to be part of Thailand provided that they have greater control over local administration and resource management. In this regard, at least 80 percent of the ethnic Malay Muslim population in the southern border provinces has been actively engaged in electoral

⁶ Human Rights Watch, *No One Is Safe: Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Thailand’s Southern Border Provinces*, 19.

politics until today. This trend should have served as a conduit toward their greater participation in local administration, which is an alternative to an insurgency, because the majority of ethnic Malay Muslims hope that their democratic political representation will lead the Thai state to show more respect for their identity and initiate serious measures to end repression, exploitation, abuses, and impunity.

However, the government in Bangkok has repeatedly failed to build trust and confidence with ethnic Malay Muslims. Since January 2004, the Thai government has put the southern border provinces under special security legislation and mobilized the security forces to fight the separatist insurgency. The democratically elected government of Thaksin Shinawatra (2001–2006) adopted counterinsurgency policy emphasizing the use of force, with little regard for ensuring the protection of the civilian population and respecting basic rights. Special security and administrative structures under the Civilian-Police-Military (CPM) Command and the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC), which for many years served as vital channels for ethnic Malay Muslims to participate in the decisionmaking process and seek redress for injustices, were also abolished by Thaksin.

State-sanctioned abuses during the Thaksin administration were most clearly illustrated by the Krue Se (April 28, 2004) and Tak Bai (October 25, 2004) killings. These incidents, along with numerous cases of arbitrary arrests, torture, “disappearances,” and extrajudicial killings, added fuel to the fire and ensured the spread of insurgency.

The Thai military was critical of Thaksin’s policy and actions in the southern border provinces, particularly Thaksin’s decision to replace the army with the police, his installation of cronies into senior positions, and the poor intelligence gathered about separatist groups.

The military coup against Thaksin on September 19, 2006, was illegal and represented a serious setback for democracy in Thailand, but it provided an opportunity for a new approach to be implemented in the southern border provinces. General Surayud Chulanont (a noted reformer when he was army chief and supreme commander of the armed forces) was sworn in to become Thailand’s interim prime minister on October 1, 2006. He embarked on a set of initiatives to win back the support of the ethnic Malay Muslim population and to improve the government’s counterinsurgency capability. On November 2, 2006, General Surayud gave a public apology to ethnic Malay Muslims by admitting that what happened in the southern border provinces in the past was mostly the fault of the state. He also reestablished the SBPAC to help investigate and take action against complaints from the ethnic Malay Muslim population concerning corrupt, abusive, or inept government officials.

But General Surayud was unable to carry out any significant changes. Placed under control of the military-dominated International Security Operation Command (ISOC), the SBPAC cannot effectively address the question of abuses and injustice—something that General Surayud had pointed out earlier as underlying the problems in the southern border provinces. Against this backdrop, the vast majority of security personnel sent to the southern border provinces do not have the needed understanding of the sociopolitical context of the insurgency. The rules of

engagement are not properly and effectively spelled out to the troops, leaving many of them with a conviction that they are licensed to resort to extrajudicial measures and excessive force.

General Surayud's initiatives were also undermined by the brutal tactics of *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani*. While General Surayud called for patience, understanding, and reconciliation between Buddhist Thais and ethnic Malay Muslims, *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* stepped up attacks on Buddhist civilians. Daily reports of the burning, beheading, and summary execution of Buddhist Thais by separatist militants were blamed on General Surayud's "soft approach." The policy of reconciliation was seen as a sign of weakness, indicating that Buddhist Thais in the southern border provinces were to be left at the mercy of *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani*.

By the end of 2006, the control of counterinsurgency policy in the southern border provinces shifted to the junta leader General Sonthi Bunyaratglin. Security sweeps in the strongholds of *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* and targeted "snatches" of militant suspects have since been carried out across the southern border provinces under the codename *Yuttakarn Pitak Daen Tai* (Operation Southern Defender). In 2007 alone, the ISOC reported that more than 2,000 ethnic Malay Muslims were arrested and detained by the security forces using powers of martial law and the emergency decree. Many suspects were detained up to 37 days in a military facility without any functioning safeguards against human rights abuses. Thai security forces have been accused of torturing detainees to obtain information and confessions (most notably by severe beatings, near-suffocation by drowning or placing plastic bags over their heads, and electric shocks to their testicles). These illegal, brutal, and inhumane treatments of suspects have been found in both district-level camps and the main interrogation center inside Ingkhayuthboriharn Camp in Pattani Province.

The end of a military-installed administration did not lead to the improvement of this situation. Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej and his successor Somchai Wongsawat (Thaksin's brother-in-law) have been hamstrung by the political crisis in Bangkok and have left important security decisions in the hands of the current army chief General Anupong Paochinda.

General Anupong endorsed a significant buildup of forces from regular and volunteer units in the southern border provinces to more than 100,000 personnel. He also restructured the operational command in a manner that sought to involve the military as a whole in counterinsurgency operations. The revamp involved the 1st (central), 2nd (northeast), and the 3rd (north) army commands taking responsibility for security in Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala Provinces, respectively. The deputy commanders of these commands have been dispatched to take command of provincial taskforces in their areas of operation. The 4th army command assumes operational responsibility for the four districts of Songkhla Province.

Thai security forces under General Anupong's command have developed better intelligence regarding *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* and the commando units known as Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK) to the extent that they could significantly disrupt plans to attack military and civilian targets over the past six months. Many key *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* (both in military and political wings) have been identified and blacklisted, leading to their arrests or deaths—both by

targeted assassinations and in gun battles with Thai security forces. Training facilities, bomb-making factories, and weapons caches have been raided. Key facilitators, who provided a safe passage for separatist militants to escape to Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as money couriers (who channelled money within the southern border provinces and across the Thai-Malaysian border to finance political and military operations) have been identified and arrested.

Resilient Insurgency and Failed Political Dialogues

While Thai security forces assess their counterinsurgency operations as being successful and on the right track with the number of daily attacks reduced by about 50 percent during the first half of 2008 (compared to the same period in 2007), ethnic Malay Muslims have come to believe that the change of government does not make their lives any better. The bottom line is that they still have no access to justice amid ongoing abuses and impunity committed by the security forces. This perception has been further reinforced by the government's decision to extend the enforcement of the emergency decree, which gives security personnel immunity from being held accountable to their misconduct and abusive behaviors. Such widespread resentment toward the Thai state contributes to the resilience of separatist insurgents. Not only are *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* able to attract new recruits using glaring evidence of ongoing repressive control, abuses, and injustice, but they can also demonstrate to the ethnic Malay Muslim population that the Thai state has no credibility to engage in any political dialogue.

Using state-sponsored abuses to justify their actions, *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* often react to field visits by senior Thai officials (as part of the attempt to reach out to the ethnic Malay Muslim population in the southern border provinces) by stepping up attacks.⁷ They have also reacted in the same way to dialogue initiatives, which began in 2005.⁸ Former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohammad brought together exiled “old-generation” leaders of separatist groups. There were several meetings in Langkawi and Kuala Lumpur. Other efforts were made separately by an international mediation organization and senior officials of the Indonesian government

⁷ On August 21, 2008, a large car bomb exploded in front of a restaurant near a police station in the Sungai Golok district of Narathiwat Province. A small bomb exploded first, causing no injuries but drawing a crowd. About 20 minutes later, two 15 kilogram bombs inside a car parked about 10 meters away exploded, killing a journalist and two rescue workers. More reprisal attacks to state-sponsored abuses have been reported, particularly after the much-publicized torture and murder of Imam Yapa Kaseng on March 21, 2008, by soldiers from the army's 39th Taskforce in Rue Soh district of Narathiwat Province. Some insurgents aimed specifically to spread terror among the Buddhist Thai population by beheading victims or setting their bodies on fire. Throughout the second half of 2008, teachers and students from government schools continued to be attacked in roadside ambushes and targeted assassinations.

⁸ Many senior Malay Muslim participants, particularly those from the “old generation” of leadership, told Human Rights Watch that they feared deadly reprisals by *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* (who accused them as traitors).

(particularly, Vice President Jusuf Kalla), which has arranged several rounds of talks. But to date, these meetings have produced no concrete results.

Efforts to engage separatist groups in a dialogue process suffered a major setback on July 17, 2008. Senior Thai politicians and military officers propped up a televised statement by the United Underground Southern Insurgent Group promising to unconditionally give up the separatist insurgency. Apart from allegations of large-scale profiteering by Thai officials and ethnic Malay Muslim facilitators involved in this setup, the United Underground Southern Insurgent Group does not exist in reality. The entire ordeal was a hoax, which has since been considered by the ethnic Malay Muslim population as evidence that Thai authorities will never take serious efforts to use political measures to improve the situation in the southern border provinces.⁹

Whatever approach the Thai government adopts, it is clear that continuing government abuses will only make matters worse. What is required is evenhanded and patient governance from Bangkok, serious and public measures to end impunity, and the building of bridges and dialogue with moderate ethnic Malay Muslims. This path may take some time to bear fruit, but it is the way that a moderate policy will be available to develop.

It must also be noted that the prescriptions of advocates of reconciliation and justice will not easily stem the violence by BRN-Coordinate and *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani*. Their resilience is based on the combination of the increasingly radical nationalist Islamist platform and widespread resentment toward the Thai state among the ethnic Malay Muslim population. As insurgent violence becomes more “spectacular” and the accusations of *kafir* oppression of ethnic Malay Muslims exacerbate, the situation in Thailand’s southern border provinces has attracted more attention from jihadi groups in Malaysia and Indonesia.¹⁰ It may only be the question of how long the ethnic Malay nationalist platform of BRN-Coordinate and *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani*, which has to date served as a floodgate against the involvement of foreign Muslim extremist groups, will remain in place.

⁹ This is similar to reactions to Thaksin’s idea to encourage people from all over Thailand to send paper birds as a peace message to the southern border provinces. In total, more than 100 million paper birds were air dropped on December 5, 2004.

¹⁰ BRN-Coordinate and *Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani* interpret their armed struggle as a “homegrown” struggle, in which only ethnic Malay Muslims can be the fighters. Nevertheless, they allow members of Muslim extremist groups from Malaysia and Indonesia to seek sanctuary in the southern border provinces and acknowledge their sympathy for their armed struggle. They have also absorbed ideological radicalization and military skills from Muslim extremist groups in Malaysia and Indonesia. But recently, Thai security forces have arrested many foreign Muslims, who claimed to come to the southern border provinces to “help our Muslim brothers fight Siamese soldiers.” The remains of recent car bombs and roadside bomb attacks also show components (such as batteries, explosive booster, and fuses) from Malaysia.

11

“A CARNIVAL OF CRIME”: THE ENIGMA OF THE ABU SAYYAF

Christopher (Kit) Collier

“Dilatory tactics, indecision and lack of firmness will result in a carnival of crime and an absolute contempt for authority in this region.”—General Leonard Wood, U.S. Army, Governor of the Moro Province, 1903–1906.¹

Introduction

Ninety years after American military rule ended in the southern Philippines, the U.S. Army returned to Zamboanga, and by early 2003 was poised to reenter the Sulu Archipelago, site of the two countries’ bloodiest colonial encounters. The reason: a drive to decisively “disrupt and defeat” the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), considered a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) by Washington, linked to al Qaeda.

There is far from unanimous agreement on the nature of Abu Sayyaf, however. Aside from being labeled “international terrorists,” they have also been described as “Muslim bandits”; “social bandits”; “outlaws with an agenda”;² “new entrepreneurs in violence ... neither rebel nor revolutionary”;³ a “revolutionary group” fighting for an Islamic state;⁴ a “splinter group”; or a “dirty tricks division” of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF); Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF); or even the Armed Forces of the Philippines; and a “CIA creation.”⁵ The paper closely analyzes several episodes of conflict in the southern Philippines, providing a number of

Reprinted with permission from Christopher Collier, “A Carnival of Crime’: The Enigma of the Abu Sayyaf,” in *The US and the War on Terror in the Philippines*, ed. Patricio N. Abinales and Nathan Gilbert (Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil, 2008).

¹ Horace P. Hobbs, *Kris and Krag: Adventures Among the Moros of the Southern Philippine Islands* (n.p.: 1962), 150, as cited in Nasser A. Marohomsalic, *Aristocrats of the Malay Race: A History of the Bangsa Moro in the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: VJ Graphics Arts, 1995), 130.

² Charles Frake, “Abu Sayyaf: Displays of Violence and the Proliferation of Contested Identities among Philippine Muslims,” *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 1 (March 1998): 41–54.

³ Eric Gutierrez, “New Faces of Violence in Muslim Mindanao,” in *Rebels, Warlords and Ulama: A Reader on Muslim Separatism and the War in Southern Philippines*, ed. Kristina Gaerlan and Mara Stankovitch (Quezon City, Philippines: Institute for Popular Democracy, 2000), 349–362.

⁴ Nathan Quimpo, “Dealing with the MILF and Abu Sayyaf: Who’s Afraid of an Islamic State?” *Public Policy* 3, no. 4 (October–December 1999): 38–62.

⁵ Author’s interview with Mohagher Iqbal, MILF Central Committee, Cotabato City, March 5, 2003.

illustrative vignettes to demonstrate its Rashomon-like quality and show how the cycle of conflict is perpetuated while serving underlying material interests on various “sides.”

Background

As an apparent classic case of ethnonationalist separatism situated on a “civilizational fault line” hundreds of years old,⁶ the southern Philippines lends itself easily to accounts that emphasize deeply rooted, intractable “ancient hatreds.” The very term “Moro” (moor)—originally applied to the region’s diverse Muslim ethnolinguistic groups by Portuguese and Spaniards only a generation removed from the final Catholic reconquista of Iberia—evokes an epic civilizational struggle spanning centuries and continents, a “grand movement of clashing peoples,” as Robert Kaplan characterizes the contemporary Balkans.⁷ Yet even as apparently “ethnic” armed conflicts have assumed new global significance in the post–Cold War era, doubts are being expressed as to whether the mainsprings of many superficially tribal or religious civil wars might not be more parochial or “banal” in nature,⁸ rather than a confrontation of two clearly defined “sides,” each focused on decisive victory.

Many of today’s persistent internal conflicts and “new wars”⁹ manifest an absence of clear political programs, a hazy distinction between war and peace, proliferating factions, disintegrating lines of command, ferocious attacks on civilians, deliberate provocation of repression, widespread racketeering and illicit cooperation between rebels and authorities, and other behaviors that, in peacetime, would be considered criminal, and in wartime, strategically self-defeating.¹⁰ All are conspicuous elements of the southern Philippines conflict, and the Abu Sayyaf phenomenon in particular.

Episode One

The Basilan Capitol Fire: “Terrorists Strike South,” *Manila Chronicle*, June 9, 1993, front page

Fire destroyed the provincial capitol of Basilan Monday night, gutting communications equipment and cutting off the island province from the rest of the country.

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

⁷ Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1993).

⁸ See John Mueller, “The Banality of ‘Ethnic War,’” *International Security* 25, no. 1 (Summer 2000): 42–70; and Paul Brass, *Theft of an Idol* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁹ Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

¹⁰ David Keen, *The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars*, Adelphi Paper 320 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1998).

Authorities suspect the fire was deliberately set....

Police in Isabela were checking if the extremist Muslim group, the Abu Sayyaf, was behind the fire.

The military raided the group's lair in the mountains of Basilan last month in an attempt to rescue Spanish priest Bernardo Blanco, who was kidnapped in March...

Chief Supt. Job Mayo, police director for Region 9, which has jurisdiction over Basilan, has a different theory.

He said he would link the fire to the fact that the provincial government was undergoing an audit.

A government audit team had arrived at Isabela last Monday to look into the financial condition of the provincial government, according to Mayo.

The fire destroyed the provincial government's records before the auditors could take a look at them, Mayo reported.

The burning of the Basilan capitol building was one of the first occasions that Abu Sayyaf hit Manila's front pages, to begin haunting the nation's consciousness for the next decade. The content of the story, however, belied the inch-high headlines advertising it. The *Philippine Daily Inquirer* likewise led with the headline "Abu Sayyaf Eyed in Basilan Capitol Blaze," while inserting an apparently unrelated story about a nationwide terrorist alert (if terrorists can "Strike South," perhaps they can "Strike North," too). Subsequent side-bar reports in small-point type lent added weight to the "corruption" angle. Provincial government workers had not been receiving their salaries on time, and of 30 million Philippine pesos in calamity funds provided months earlier by Manila to rebuild the town of Tuburan, which was heavily damaged in a military offensive in February, only 600,000 pesos had been distributed. Further muddying the waters were conflicting reports of faulty wiring in the capitol building.

Anthropologist Charles Frake notes in his discussion of the incident that this "labyrinth of disputations" reflected strategic moves among Yakan factions inside and outside official provincial power and the local Philippine marines garrison (then under Brig. Gen. Guillermo Ruiz, and a major political-economic player on Basilan). Nevertheless, "on the national scene, the Abu Sayyaf got the credit. It was, for the national audience, a better story." Ten years on, Abu Sayyaf has an *international* audience and is making international headlines. As Frake remarked with prescience:¹¹

When disparate local conflicts [that are typically quite parochial in origin] produce eruptions of violence sufficiently impressive to receive regional and national attention,

¹¹ Frake, "Abu Sayyaf: Displays of Violence and the Proliferation of Contested Identities among Philippine Muslims," 49-50.

they are subject to interpretations that, even though uninformed as to local causes, provide a new context for framing “what happened.” This new context, in turn, becomes a frame that shapes local interpretations of subsequent events.

Jolo Vignette: A “Pag-pitu” in Indanan

In the shadow of Mount Tumantangis (“the weeping mountain”), the highest peak on the lush volcanic island of Jolo, the eerie wail of a traditional Tausug *lugu*, or mourning song, is accompanied by the distant staccato of machine-gun fire from UH-1H helicopter gunships and punctuated by the dull crump of a 90 mm recoilless rifle. To the uninitiated visitor, the battle raging just three kilometers from the mourners’ encampment—long tables of delicacies under plastic awnings, spread out amid the coconut palms—pits two clearly demarcated antagonists against each other: the Philippine Army and Abu Sayyaf. As Eric Gutierrez points out, however, alliances that are obvious to an internal or local audience on Jolo may be invisible to outsiders.¹²

This particular dispute is a case in point. Elements of the 53rd Infantry Battalion, supported by the Philippine Air Force’s Third Tactical Operations Wing, engaged followers of Abu Sayyaf commander Nandi Udih for two straight days in late March 2003. Rather than a “clash of civilizations,” though, this was a dispute over profit sharing, according to knowledgeable local sources.

Until just a few months before, Commander Nandi was a regular guest at the armed forces’ Camp Teodulfo Bautista, a well-known military “asset,” and could be seen swaggering about the streets of downtown Jolo with a retinue of several dozen heavily armed supporters. Acting as a middleman between the military and Abu Sayyaf, Nandi purchased arms and ammunition from the former for trafficking to the latter. Bullets procured at between 7 and 9 pesos apiece (about 15 U.S. cents) were sold to the rebels at a handsome markup: 14 to 16 pesos for 5.56 mm ammunition, 21 or 22 pesos for 7.62 mm. This cozy relationship was disrupted when police attempted to enforce an arrest warrant for cattle rustling, one of Nandi’s other profitable sidelines. Dissatisfied with the division of spoils and concerned that Nandi might sing at trial, corrupt officers moved to silence him for good. A violent confrontation ensued.¹³

Viewed from a distance, the grubby reality of local-level collusion fades from sight, and the conflict on Jolo resolves into the clearly opposed battle lines of the war on terror. On the ground, though, it remains far from clear who the enemy really is. According to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), there were a total of 469 armed Abu Sayyaf terrorists in the southern Philippines at the end of February 2003, with more than 300 operating in Sulu. These figures

¹² Gutierrez, “New Faces of Violence in Muslim Mindanao.”

¹³ See Republic of the Philippines, Ninth Regional Trial Court, Fourth Branch, Parang, Sulu, Criminal Case no. 617-4 for qualified theft. Bail for Commander Nandi in the cattle-rustling case was provided by Major Mirajul Karanain, commanding officer of the 4th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army, in the amount of 100,000 pesos (\$1,750).

came as a surprise in light of the reported success of the joint U.S.-Philippine maneuvers known as Balikatan 02-1, which, we were told, reduced the ASG to a rump of 250 men overall at year-end 2002. Outgoing AFP chief of staff General Dionisio Santiago acknowledged that military intelligence had underestimated terrorist strength by nearly 50 percent. But the real problem is one of definition.

Seasoned anthropologist Thomas Kiefer has spent years studying the Tausug, the people of Jolo, and points out that the notion of a clearly bounded “group”—as in Abu Sayyaf Group—is virtually meaningless in Tausug society. Instead, Tausug political and military life is structured by temporary factional alliances, “overlapping and criss-crossing ties in which the same men may be torn apart and bound together in multiple ways at the same time.” So-called minimal alliance networks are centered on a charismatic leader and rarely number more than a score strong, with membership becoming vague at the edges as one network shades off into another. Such networks only come together as “medial” or “maximal” alliances of hundreds or even thousands of men if a third common enemy, shared among them, emerges.¹⁴ Because every man in every component minimal alliance follows only his own leader and is typically pursuing only individual advantage, not any generalized ideology, larger alliances of expediency are extremely unstable. Abu Sayyaf is just such a medial alliance. It has no firm boundaries—only leaders with followers who interact with other leaders with followers. Hence the difficulty in estimating Abu Sayyaf numbers.

Many armed encounters on Jolo and Basilan that are portrayed as clashes with Abu Sayyaf actually involve disputes over petty profiteering, such as the battle with Commander Nandi or guerrillas of the Misuari Breakaway Group of the MNLF (on Jolo) or MILF (on Basilan). In the face of a third common enemy, the AFP, the boundaries among these three theoretically discrete insurgent groups frequently become hazy, as leaders with personal ties form temporary medial alliances. It should be emphasized that these are *personal* alliances of convenience, more than organizational or ideological “links.”

The MNLF, which initiated the armed struggle for Philippine Muslim (“Moro”) self-determination in the south more than 30 years ago, signed a peace pact with the Philippine government in Jakarta in September 1996. On mainland Mindanao, an uneasy truce with the MNLF, based on a faltering autonomy formula, continues. But on Jolo, where Bangsa Moro Army (BMA, the armed wing of the MNLF) fighters remain staunchly loyal to fellow Tausug-founding chairman Nur Misuari, the war with the MNLF effectively resumed in October 2001, when government forces assaulted a main MNLF camp in the village of Tiis, Talipao municipality, killing seven men. The more widely publicized response of Misuari’s followers was to storm Camp Bautista and stage an uprising in Zamboanga City. Misuari fled to Malaysia, but was arrested and turned over to the Philippine authorities. He languished in a military prison near

¹⁴ Thomas M. Kiefer, *The Tausug: Violence and Law in a Philippine Moslem Society* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1986), 71–74.

Manila for two years but remained in touch with his field commanders via cell phone. They had grown increasingly restless.¹⁵

Even before the Tiis attack, tensions mounted on Jolo throughout 2000 as the government of later-deposed President Joseph Estrada unleashed a furious offensive against the MILF on Mindanao and on Jolo against the Talipao-based Abu Sayyaf faction of Ghalib “Commander Robot” Andang, catapulted to infamy by protracted and bizarre negotiations over the fate of foreign tourists and resort workers snatched from Sipadan Island, off Sabah.¹⁶ Some veteran MNLF leaders on Jolo, such as the Patikul-based Radulan Sahiron (known as Commander Putol or “the one-armed bandit,” in honor of a missing limb), disillusioned by the autonomy formula, formed alliances of convenience with individual Abu Sayyaf commanders. Putol married the widow of Abu Sayyaf chieftain Abdurajak Janjalani following his death on Basilan in December 1998, and is therefore, by extension, allied to his brother, Khadaffy. Without a network of his own on Jolo, Khadaffy drew on this alliance to seek refuge in Putol’s territory from Balikatan 02-1 on Basilan. In sum, although relations between Khadaffy and Robot are characterized by deep mistrust—Putol’s ties with Khadaffy are familial rather than ideological, and Nandi’s have been with the AFP rather than al Qaeda—by the logic of the war on terror, all four belong to a single organization with a single cause, implacably hostile to the United States.

Seemingly oblivious to the ongoing battle a few kilometers distant, the villagers of Barangay Likup, Indanan, continued about the business of their ritual *pag-pitu*, observing the seventh day because four of their neighbors were found “beheaded” in adjacent Barangay Cabun Maas. According to Antajul Ayyadi, sole survivor of the events of Thursday, March 20, 2003, in Cabun Maas, he, together with Radjail Mukkamali (aged 68), Al-Majal Jainul (19), Binnaser Muammil (18), and Jul-Hajir Sahibul (12), were fetching a cow from pasture in Sitio Lampaki around four in the afternoon when they were accosted by a large group of armed men. Ordered to strip, their clothes were used to bind and blindfold them. Then they were interrogated and beaten with rifle butts before being made to kneel and struck on the neck with their own *bolo* knives.¹⁷

Colonel Alexander Aleo, 104th Army Brigade commander on Jolo, confirmed that elite army scout rangers had been pursuing the group of Abu Sayyaf leader “Doktor Abu” Pula in Cabun Maas that Thursday and that the four “beheaded” villagers may have been attacked by the withdrawing rebels “on suspicion they were military spies.” Colonel Aleo said he doubted soldiers were involved in the massacre, pointedly citing Abu Sayyaf’s notoriety for beheading civilians. “4 Sulu Villagers Beheaded,” the *Philippine Star* obligingly reported, noting a stepped up campaign

¹⁵ Author’s interview with Nur Misuari, Fort Santo Domingo, Santa Rosa, Laguna, March 31, 2003.

¹⁶ For a detailed and partisan account of the hostage negotiations, see Roberto N. Aventajado, *140 Days of Terror: In the Clutches of the Abu Sayyaf* (Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil, 2004).

¹⁷ Author’s interviews, Indanan, Jolo, Sulu, March 27, 2003. To anticipate possible ethical objections to the use of actual names in this account, it should be mentioned that the victims’ families, and survivor Ayyadi, emphatically want their story told in full.

“following the killings” against the rebels “linked to the al Qaeda network of Osama bin Laden.” According to the *Daily Zamboanga Times*, however, the official report of the incident reaching Southern Command headquarters was “Four Sulu Villagers Killed in Crossfire”; the victims had been used as “human shields” by Abu Sayyaf or, alternatively, had been hit by bullets “coming from Abu Sayyaf positions.” Survivor Ayyadi, however, positively identifies the perpetrators of the massacre as members of Class 142, 15th Scout Ranger Company. Photographs of the victims show clear contusions to the face and hack and stab wounds to the neck. They were not shot, and they were not “beheaded.”¹⁸

Episode Two

The Lamitan Siege: A Contemporary “Moro-Moro”

“A pandora’s box. . . . An eye opener on the state of governance in this country, where entrenched interests reaching even up to Malacanang [the presidential palace] are holding an entire society hostage.” This is how a Philippine congressman, a member of the governing coalition speaking off the record, described the explosive disclosures of witnesses testifying before a congressional inquiry into the siege of the St. Peter and St. Paul parish compound in Lamitan, Basilan. When the commanding general at the scene, Romeo Dominguez, was awarded his second star by the Commission on Appointments (the Senate inquiry was to subsequently recommend court martial instead), this congressman’s reaction was: “Oh my God.”¹⁹

The mass abduction of 21 foreign tourists and resort staff from Malaysia’s Sipadan Island in April 2000 drew an international media circus to the southern Philippines, which completely overshadowed the seizure of 53 Filipinos on Basilan a month before.²⁰ The situation became increasingly farcical as first, 13 members of the Jesus Miracle Crusade, determined to “pray over” the kidnap victims, were themselves taken captive, followed by a string of European and Filipino journalists desperate for the scoop of a face-to-face interview. In a parallel with the “franchised” nature of “new terrorism,”²¹ some of the journalists reported being seized by freelance armed groups and offered for sale to Abu Sayyaf, who could then demand higher ransoms precisely by virtue of the awe that they now commanded as well-publicized “entrepreneurs in violence.”²² The more striking parallel, however, is with the impact of the late eighteenth-century European

¹⁸ *Philippine Star*, March 26 2003, 16; *Today*, March 26 2003, 12; *Daily Zamboanga Times*, March 25, 2003, 1. Only one of the victims’ neck wounds were severe enough to suggest a serious *attempt* to decapitate.

¹⁹ Author’s interview, Quezon City, Philippines, April 30, 2002.

²⁰ Jose Torres Jr., *Into the Mountain: Hostaged by the Abu Sayyaf* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 2001).

²¹ See, for example, Raymond Bonner, “Southeast Asia Remains Fertile for al-Qaeda,” *New York Times*, October 30, 2002, which quotes an Asian official to the effect that “Al-Qaeda is the McDonald’s of terrorism.”

²² Gutierrez, “New Faces of Violence in Muslim Mindanao.”

commodities trade on Sulu, which stimulated a drastic increase in slave raiding across the region. In the early twenty-first century, the impingement of globalized print and video capitalism on a weak, segmentary state has likewise stimulated demand for the products of the “fishers of men.”²³

Abu Sayyaf obligingly followed up their Sipadan caper with a raid on the exclusive Dos Palmas resort in Palawan on May 27, 2001, carrying off 20 new victims, including three Americans. This incident preceded the 9/11 attacks by less than four months, of course, and its extended aftermath can be regarded as a direct precipitant of the following year’s U.S. military intervention. Yet in its particulars, the fate of the Dos Palmas hostages reveals a closer affinity to the blurred lines of new war than the moral certitudes of new terrorism, with “cooperation between opposing sides,” and the workings of the southern Philippines’ “predatory social condition,” on rare public view.

Four days after the abduction, the Abu Sayyaf band, Palawan hostages in tow, took control of a church and hospital compound in the center of Lamitan, Basilan. Hundreds of troops lay siege to the compound from June 1 to June 3 but mysteriously withdrew from the rear of the hospital on the afternoon of June 2, whereupon most of Abu Sayyaf, including its core leadership, made their escape in broad daylight. Their human traffic was boosted by additional hostages taken from the hospital staff and lightened by the ransoming, with apparent military connivance, of three of the Filipino captives from Dos Palmas. A pyrotechnic display of firepower using air-launched rockets and heavy-caliber machine guns failed to cause a single enemy casualty and continued for many hours after the ASG’s exit, prompting accusations that the “engagement” was stage managed.

Following a public outcry, an inquiry by the Philippine Senate found “strong circumstantial evidence” of official collusion with the ASG before and during the Lamitan siege.²⁴ A joint investigation by the *Boston Globe* and Helsinki’s *Helsingen Sanomat* found that “high-ranking members of the Philippine military, as well as members of local government, have colluded with the Islamic extremists that U.S. troops are being sent here to combat.” The *Globe* feared this posed the potential for “treacherous conflicts in loyalties that may hamper the U.S. mission,” while the *Sanomat* affirmed that “an array of plausible military, eyewitness and documentary sources indicate that the ruthlessness and greed of some high-ranking Philippine Army officers may pose nearly as great a security concern for the U.S. troops as the ... Abu Sayyaf cadres they are seeking to eradicate.”²⁵ More than two years after the inexplicable events, and a year after the Philippine Senate recommended the court martial of three commanding officers on the scene, the AFP

²³ James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981), 182. This is not intended to suggest that the Philippines as a whole is a weak and segmentary state; but the Philippine state in parts of the south does continue to display such characteristics.

²⁴ Republic of the Philippines, 12th Congress, Senate Committee Report 72 (August 19, 2002), 44.

²⁵ Pekka Mykkänen, “Greed of Philippines Army Elements May Be a Security Hazard for U.S. Troops,” *Helsingen Sanomat* (Helsinki), February 3, 2002.

inspector general has yet to take any concrete action, raising troubling questions of how wide the circle of collusion might be.²⁶

A hand-painted “Chronology of [the] Lamitan Siege” inside the compound where the events transpired expresses the sense of disbelief and betrayal of many Lamitenos:

May 27, 2001—a group of ASG took hostages from the Dos Palmas resort, Palawan and headed for Basilan.

May 31, 2001—The ASG docked in barangay Canas, Tuburan.

June 1, 2001—11:30 p.m. Three passenger jeepneys where ASG boarded passed by the military check point without being challenged. 11.45pm. ASG entered Dr. Torres Hospital and St. Peter Church.

June 2, 2001—11:00 a.m. Soldiers from 18th IB positioned along Torres St. were being ordered to pull out. 11:45 a.m. Reghis Romero, Riza and R.J. Recio seen walking along Torres St. **4:00 p.m. An order to pull out of all soldiers 55th IB, 142nd SR, 18th IB at the back of the hospital by EXO of the 18th IB PA for the briefing. 5:30 p.m. In full afternoon and in public view the ASG confidently started to exit through the back door of the hospital together with their hostages.** Some hostages escaped and informed the military that the ASG were escaping.

June 3, 2001—2:00 a.m. For about 30 minutes the military bombarded the hospital and the church with heavy firings. Two houses were burned. For about 18 hours there was a heavy exchanged of fire between the military and ASG. More or less about 95 percent of the firing was coming from the military. There was heavy damage in the Church properties and surroundings including the hospital.

Since that June 2 incident, people have come forward and exposed the truth of what they have witnessed. They signed it with their lives and future of their own and their loved ones [emphasis added].

For Father Cirilo “Loi” Nacorda, parish priest of Lamitan and a vocal critic of the military’s conduct during the siege, doubts began arising about the real relationship between the armed forces and Abu Sayyaf when he was taken hostage for three months in 1994. During his captivity, he overheard negotiations by radio between ASG commanders and a congressman with close ties to the military on Basilan. A consignment of B-57 rockets was subsequently delivered to the rebel camp where Nacorda was detained, in crates still marked “DND-Phils” (Department of National Defense–Philippines). His suspicions were deepened by the mysterious behavior of military patrols that, at the time, seemed to deliberately avoid making contact with the roaming group of

²⁶ Martin Marfil and Tonette Orejas, “No Court Martial Yet for Lack of Evidence,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 9, 2003.

ASG holding him, while at others engaging in heavy-handed but largely ineffectual displays of firepower.²⁷

The failure of military checkpoints to prevent the ASG's entry into Lamitan, the ransoming of three of the Palawan hostages (Romero, Riza Santos, and youngster R.J. Recio) with apparent military connivance and in violation of standing policy, the unexplainable military withdrawal from the ASG escape route, and the superfluous armed assault hours after the main ASG force's exit have cumulatively led many eyewitnesses to conclude that the siege was "scripted," "stage-managed," or "arranged in advance." This, for them, was a contemporary *Moro-Moro*, a contrived morality play pitching Christian versus Muslim, good versus evil, of the kind once beloved by Visayan communities preyed on for centuries by sea-borne raiders from the south.

Although it is commonplace among Moro nationalists and peace advocates to decry the "stereotyping" of Philippine Muslims inherent in this traditional theatrical form, what is less frequently pointed out is the complicity (and material interest) of some Muslims themselves in perpetuating stereotypes of "fierceness" (*isog*) and military prowess, long a crucial feature of the local-regional political economy. Charles Frake draws our attention to the ways in which multiple "Moro" identities were actively cultivated by various tribes in accordance with their economic functions under the Sulu sultanate.²⁸ The Badjao or Sama Laut were mild-mannered gatherers of the fruits of the sea, despised by the courageous warrior Tausug for the impurity of their semi-Islamic customs.

But the fiercest of the fierce were the Balangingi Sama, sometime freelance buccaneers, sometime subcontractors of the sultanate, whose slave-raiding apogee coincided with the boom in the China trade accompanying international economic penetration between 1768 and 1848.²⁹ For the raiding tribes, an identity tied to a reputation for "fierceness" was a concrete resource underlying their command of the southern seas. In modern times, new "entrepreneurs in violence" such as Commander Robot are likewise adept at parlaying the capacity, and more important still, the *reputation* for ruthless coercion, into the local "respect" (*galang*) that is the principal form of sociopolitical capital in the Hobbesian enclaves of the southern Philippines. Their returns have similarly been boosted by the intrusion of wider national and international political and economic forces, including video-capitalism; but these forces have their own interests, which are equally well served by the reappropriation of the *isog* stereotype. Like the members of a theatrical cast, each of these players has a mutually supporting role in the ongoing "carnival of crime," which will continue to run as long as "dilatatory tactics" persist in redressing such incidents as the siege of Lamitan.

²⁷ Author's interview, Lamitan, Basilan, April 24, 2002.

²⁸ Frake, "Abu Sayyaf: Displays of Violence and the Proliferation of Contested Identities among Philippine Muslims."

²⁹ Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898*.

12

WILL THE CONFLICT IN MINDANAO LOOK LIKE THE INSURGENCY IN SOUTHERN THAILAND?

Ishak V. Mastura

For those who believe that the decentralized Muslim insurgency of southern Thailand will be the model for insurgency in Mindanao, consider recent history in the Sulu and Basilan Islands in the Sulu Archipelago, as it may give us a glimpse into the future of insurgency on the island.

When the original Moro revolutionary organization, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), forged a peace agreement with the government in 1996, it did not transform into a political organization because its leaders were determined to take up arms again should the agreement fail. The MNLF subsequently imploded when circumstances changed and several splinter groups formed. Among the various factions that emerged from the MNLF, some no longer desired an armed struggle, while others joined existing armed groups or formed new ones. In 2001, however, MNLF's founder, Nur Misuari, once again raised the banner of rebellion, and the antigovernment MNLF forces in Sulu continued to fight under his leadership. After Misuari was captured, new leaders arose and sustained the armed struggle in Sulu.

The most ominous upsurge in fighting came from those who joined the Abu Sayyaf Group. At its height, during the Sipadan and Dos Palmas kidnappings and the Lamitan siege, the relatively small group swelled to a thousand members. The trademark characteristics of Abu Sayyaf were that its membership was fluid and mercenary—members of the organization included bandit groups looking only for a share of the spoils. Abdurajak Janjalani, the group's founder, conceived of Abu Sayyaf as an Islamist-oriented revolutionary struggle for Bangsamoro self-determination, similar to the 1979 Afghan uprising against the Soviet Union.

According to fourth generation war guru William Lind, what the Philippine military is facing today—mostly the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a splinter faction of the MNLF that broke away in 1977—is not fourth generation warfare but rather a war of national liberation fought by people whose goal is to create a Bangsamoro state. As that goal fades and those forces splinter, fourth generation war will develop in its place. This new generation of war will not be characterized by methods of warfare but rather by who fights and their cause. Degeneration into fourth generation warfare will make it difficult to distinguish friend from foe and will make the political compromises necessary to end the fighting impossible—there will be no one to talk to and nothing to talk about. As the fighting draws to a close, the local revolutionary order will vanish, leaving behind an “ungoverned territory” that will cause more nonstate elements to rise and fight.

After the MNLF imploded and Abu Sayyaf rose as the preeminent armed group in Sulu and Basilan, the Philippine government sent more troops to destroy the organization. The government treated all other antigovernment forces—including the MNLF men in Sulu—as if they were part of Abu Sayyaf. Designating rebel factions as Abu Sayyaf allowed the government more freedom of action, as Abu Sayyaf had been added to the U.S. State Department’s list of foreign terrorist organizations. Extrajudicial killings increased, and innocent civilians became collateral damage in the military’s punitive actions. Predictably, the Moros—who, like the Afghans, are traditionally armed—fought back. Some analysts argued that the conflict transformed into a “people’s war.”

Sporadic clashes continue to occur in Sulu between soldiers and unaffiliated Moro fighters. In February 2008, for example, army special forces raided an armed Moro community accused of harboring members of Abu Sayyaf. The raid resulted in the death of eight civilians and highlighted the complications of the U.S. military presence on the ground (American military advisers were allegedly present during the raid). Unknown elements have also assassinated government soldiers and continue to carry out bombings and kidnappings. Examples include the bombing of a cooperative store in Jolo, the capital of Sulu, in 2006, and the June 2008 kidnapping of a prominent TV journalist and her Moro guide, a prominent civil society advocate for Moro causes, by armed groups in Sulu. It is unknown if these acts were perpetrated by members of Abu Sayyaf.

As in southern Thailand, “in an effort to weaken central control, the insurgents also target Muslims who cooperate with the government. The insurgency [in Sulu and Basilan] is all the more difficult to combat because it does not show its face. Unlike similar movements around the world, this one has not set out its demands or published a manifesto. It is a collection of violent groups without an identifiable central leadership.”¹ In southern Thailand, the Thai military describes the combatants as “ghosts,” a description that is also appropriately used in Sulu and Basilan, especially when unexplained killings occur. Remnants of the old MNLF—and the MILF in the case of Basilan—are present in these areas, and members may cooperate to attack government forces. This happened in 2006, when suspected Abu Sayyaf members ambushed and beheaded soldiers in Basilan.

It needs to be stressed that, from the perspective of the Moro fighters, organizational labels used by the government—such as “rogue MNLF-ASG,” “Misuari Breakaway Group,” or, more recently, the “Lawless MILF Group”—have no meaning. Rather than a common bond to a group, these individuals are bound together by the perception of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) as the enemy. The government continues to employ labels like “Pentagon Gang,” “MILF Special Operations Group,” and “Al-Khobar” in an effort to link a variety of Moro armed gangs to the insurgency. This process only assists in the creation of new enemies because rebel fighters

¹ Seth Mydans, “Muslim Insurgency Stokes Fear in Southern Thailand,” *International Herald Tribune*, February 25, 2007.

easily move between criminal gangs and private armed groups associated with Moro politicians and political clans to the MILF, and vice versa.

Security analysts continue to question the MILF's cohesiveness. Ironically, the recent fighting in Mindanao—which was apparently brought on by a halt in peace talks—is enhancing the cohesion of the MILF because base commanders are forced to obey the leadership in order to sustain their operations. The base commanders of the MILF realize that banding together and remaining a coherent revolutionary organization will increase their chances of surviving the onslaught of the AFP. Paradoxically, the AFP cannot afford smashing the MILF into smaller armed groups because it will contribute to the devolution of the situation similar to the nightmare in southern Thailand. For the Philippine government, there is no military solution to the Moro insurgency.

Since the latest round of fighting by government forces against the base commands of Commanders Kato and Bravo in August 2008, approximately 500,000 people in central Mindanao have become refugees. The government's "police action" directed at Kato and Bravo, which is really more of a punitive action, has worsened the situation and become a self-defeating effort of collective punishment against the MILF's base. The government could have attempted to diffuse the volatile situation through mechanisms created by the peace process, such as the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group, as they did in the Basilan beheading incidents of 2007. The government claims that only 3 out of 17 MILF base commands are involved in the fighting, while the rest continue to observe the cease-fire, which formally remains in place. One could reasonably suspect that volunteers from other base commands are supporting the fighting and that the indiscriminate intrusions of the AFP into MILF territory will provoke other base commanders to fight, especially because they have taken a defensive stance on familiar terrain, which provides inherent advantages.

When comparing MNLF activity in Sulu to the future of the MILF in central Mindanao, it is important to consider that the population in Sulu is 95 to 98 percent Moro and that the bulk of the non-Moro population—consisting largely of soldiers and their families—reside in Jolo. In Basilan, large portions of the island have the same ratio of Moro to non-Moro residents as in Sulu. Sulu and Basilan are both small islands that can easily be isolated. Hence, the violence in Sulu and Basilan has, for the most part, been contained to the Sulu Archipelago. There are some spillovers of violence, however, in Zamboanga City and the Zamboanga peninsula, but the military has a forward deployment in the Sulu Archipelago to prevent the violence from escalating or reaching its target-rich cities and towns.

Imagine if a failed peace process with the MILF replicated the Sulu and Basilan scenario in central Mindanao. This could cause the MILF to splinter into a dozen or more Abu Sayyaf-type or fourth generation war groups with no central leadership. In Mindanao, the Maoist New People's Army (NPA), although Christian-led, already has a tactical alliance with the MILF to engage in "systems disruption," and it is conceivable that MILF splinter groups might join them at the fringes. If the Philippines does not want to repeat what happened to the MNLF in Sulu and Basilan, its only option is to continue working on the peace negotiations, despite setbacks such as the recent

supreme court ruling declaring the draft agreement on Moro ancestral domain unconstitutional. Moreover, if ever peace negotiations with the MILF do succeed, the government must help the MILF transition into a nonviolent Moro political entity.

A military assessment alleges that there is no threat to the MILF leadership and that the MILF still has the capacity to engage in limited semi-conventional warfare. In the meantime, the MILF has shifted to guerilla tactics because such operations are more sustainable. One needs to ask, what happens once the next generation replaces the current moderate leadership of the MILF? More immediately, will the MILF leadership lose salience as their drawn-out strategy frustrates the younger commanders and fighters? Will the next generation of Moro insurgents resort to provoking chaotic and anomic violence to enhance societal cleavages, as was used by the insurgents in southern Thailand? This strategy is a strategy of the weak, and it is not clear that the MILF has been reduced to such a desperate condition. However, the small but persistent presence of JI in the southern Philippines allows for the use of that strategy if the MILF does not see any hope of progress through a continued conventional guerilla war or peace negotiations with the government. As such, “Chechenization”² is more of a danger in Mindanao than it was in southern Thailand.

In closing, I would like to quote RAND’s Angel Rabasa, in his October 24, 2008, presentation at the Heritage Foundation event “Mindanao Impasse: Prospects for Peace and What It Means for America”:

The Philippine government and the United States have an important stake in the cohesion of the MILF because the existence of the MILF provides the Philippine government a negotiating partner. A military defeat of the MILF, even if it were possible, would make the situation in Mindanao even more difficult. The violence would not end, but could turn into the type of anomic and chaotic violence that we see today in southern Thailand. Therefore, it is the obligation of the Philippine government and of its international supporters, such as the United States, to exert every effort to move the peace process back on track and prevent the further intensification of the violence.

² In Chechnya, the national liberation struggle of a secularized Muslim population, inspired by a rich historical legacy of quests for self-determination, was taken over from within by Islamist jihadists, transforming the liberation struggle into a regional anti-Russian terrorist jihad. Yossef Bodansky, *Chechen Jihad: Al Qaeda’s Training Ground and the Next Wave of Terror* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007).

13

LITTLE-KNOWN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES AND CONCERNS IN CAMBODIA, BURMA, AND NORTHERN THAILAND

Bertil Lintner

Cambodia

There are an estimated 320,000 Muslims in Cambodia consisting of Malay immigrants called Chvea and Chams, an ethnic minority that has its origin in southern Vietnam (where they, however, are not Muslims). According to the *Phnom Penh Post*, they live in 417 Muslim-majority villages.¹ In 2005, Cambodia had 244 mosques and 313 *suraos* (prayer houses), and more are being built with assistance from charities in the Middle East.

Traditionally, the Cham have been apolitical, and they suffered heavily under the 1975 to 1979 Khmer Rouge regime. But in more recent years, they have come under the influence of radical ideas from the Middle East, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Concerns were raised when it was discovered that Indonesian-born Riudan Isamuddin (aka Hambali) was hiding out in Cambodia in late 2002 and early 2003. Cambodia's law enforcement agencies are notoriously incompetent and corrupt, which has turned the country into a haven for assorted criminals as well as Islamic radicals.

The number of Arabs entering Cambodia increased noticeably after the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in the United States. The increased numbers could have been due to people who, like Hambali, were hiding out in Cambodia, or terrorists using the country as a staging point for movement to the West. Forged documents, including passports from various countries, are easily obtainable in Cambodia.

Between 2002 and 2003, a group of Muslims—three Cambodian and two Thai—were apprehended as they were planning attacks against the British embassy and UNICEF in Phnom Penh. They were convicted, and in March 2008, Cambodia's Supreme Court upheld life sentences for the three Cambodian men. The two Thais will reportedly petition the Cambodian court to be moved to Thailand to serve their sentences. The Thai men, and their families, deny that they were planning terror attacks. "Our husbands went to Cambodia to work as religious teachers, hoping

¹ Bjorn Blengsli, "The Propagation of Islam in Cambodia: Dynamics of Religious Change," *Phnom Penh Post*, August 11, 2006.

that they could earn more money than in Thailand,” one of the wives told the French news agency Agence France-Presse at the time of their sentencing.²

Nearly all Cambodian Muslims are Sunnis of the Shafi’i school and therefore considered moderate. But the Tablighi Jama’at or Dakwah Tabliq, an Islamic missionary organization that was founded in India in 1927, has been active in Cambodia since 1989. According to some analysts, the Tablighi Jama’at is a gateway into extremism. Other commentators claim that extremists exploit the organization and that jihadists are believed to recruit Tablighi activists.

Nearly half of Cambodia’s Muslims live in the province of Kompong Cham, north of Phnom Penh. The main religious center in the province is located in Trea village, which also has the largest mosque in Cambodia. More than 20,000 Muslims attended a gathering there in April 2007, including 200 foreign Muslim scholars. Norwegian academic Bjorn Blengsli wrote in the *Phnom Penh Post*, “A policeman in charge of security tells me that 124 Muslim missionaries come from Thailand, 32 from Malaysia, five from Singapore, 18 from India, and an unknown number from Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and so on. The numbers I have are, however, unreliable official numbers, and there is a distinct possibility that the numbers...are higher.”³

Some students from the religious school in Trea continue their studies at the Abu Bakar University in Karachi and at Deobandi schools elsewhere in Pakistan. This is a clear shift from pre-1965 days, when Chams went to study almost exclusively in Malaysia.

Burma

The Muslims of Burma include people of subcontinental origin, most of who live in urban areas, where they are engaged in commerce or as laborers. But there is also a Muslim minority called Rohingyas who live in northern Arakan (Rakhine) State bordering Bangladesh. On two occasions, Burma’s military authorities have driven hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas across the border into Bangladesh, claiming that they were illegal immigrants. The first time was in March 1978 and then again in 1992. The immensely wealthy Saudi Arabian charity Rabitat al Alam al Islami began sending aid to the Rohingya refugees during the 1978 crisis and also built a hospital and a madrasah at Ukhia, south of Cox’s Bazaar in Bangladesh. The crisis also led to the formation of several militant groups among the Rohingya, of which the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) became the most powerful. It was, and still is, closely linked with Jama’at-e-Islami, especially its youth organization, Islami Chhatra Shibir. The RSO used to have its own camps near Ukhia, where young militants underwent military training.

In an interview with the Karachi-based newspaper *Ummat* on September 28, 2001, Osama bin Laden said, “There are areas in all parts of the world where strong jihadi forces are present, from

² Agence France-Presse, “Court Upholds Life Terms for Islamic Militants,” *Phnom Penh Post*, March 21, 2008.

³ Bjorn Blengsli, “No God but God,” *Phnom Penh Post*, September 20, 2007.

Bosnia to Sudan, and from Burma to Kashmir.” He was most probably referring to a small group of Rohingyas on the Burma-Bangladesh border. Some Rohingyas were reportedly recruited and sent to Afghanistan, where they were given the dangerous tasks of clearing mines and portering. According to Asian intelligence sources, Rohingya recruits were paid 30,000 Bangladeshi taka (\$525) on joining and then 10,000 (\$175) per month. The families of recruits killed in action were offered 100,000 taka (\$1,750). It is not known how many Rohingyas were sent to Afghanistan, but the scheme appears to have come to an end when, in January 2001, Bangladeshi authorities clamped down on Rohingya activists and offices in Chittagong and Cox’s Bazaar.

Northern Thailand

Chiang Mai, northern Thailand’s largest city, has the biggest Muslim population in the country after the southern provinces. Estimates vary because many of them are in the country illegally, but it could be around 10 percent of the province’s total population of 1.6 million. Most are ethnic Chinese, whose ancestors arrived in Thailand from Yunnan Province more than 100 years ago. Others are of subcontinental descent, either Tamil Muslims who have migrated from Malaysia or northern Indians who have come through Burma and often refer to themselves as “Pakistanis.”

In the past, there was little or no interaction between the Muslims in the north and in the south. But as violence has escalated in the south—and as Thailand’s security forces have been accused of committing atrocities against southern Muslims—some Muslims in the north have shown concern. Muslim lawyers from the north are representing arrested militants in the south, and many southern families have sent their children to Chiang Mai for “safe keeping.” They are housed in local madrasahs and other religious institutions.

In a separate development, Muslim missionaries from the south have begun to preach Islam in hill tribe villages in the far north of Thailand. A mosque with an adjacent madrasah has been built in the village of Pangsa, north of Chiang Rai, and the students come mostly from the Akha tribe, one of Thailand’s most disadvantaged. Most of them do not have Thai identification papers and, therefore, cannot attend government schools. The mosque and the madrasah give them a sense of identity as well as security.

The Pangsa madrasah is linked to the Darul Muallaf madrasah in Narathiwat, and so far, around 100 hill tribe children from the north have been sent there for further education. The head of the Darul Muallaf madrasah, Nusee Yakoh, was assassinated on June 24, 2004. Thai and Western intelligence officials claim that the Darul Muallaf madrasah as well as the one in Pangsa have received funding from Islamic charities in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Nusee’s family denies this and says that most of the money comes from modest donations by local Muslim villages and small charities in Malaysia.

14

ASSESSMENT OF CRIMINAL THREATS EMANATING FROM BURMA

Bertil Lintner

Summary

Burma has been in a state of civil war since independence from Britain in 1948. A multitude of ethnic armies have fought for autonomy or separation from Burma. From 1948 to 1989, there was a powerful Communist insurgency in the country. The civil war has devastated the economy of Burma's frontier areas and made narcotics one of the few lucrative commodities in a situation where "normal" commerce cannot function.

The Burmese authorities usually blame the British colonial power for the country's drug problem. However, in 1948, the annual production of opium in Burma totaled only some 30 tons; while in the 1970s, it was more than 10 times that figure, and by the mid-1990s, approximately 2,000 tons were produced. Today, the production has decreased to what it was in the 1970s. At the same time, Burma has become a major producer of methamphetamines, a drug that was not found in the country 20 years ago.

Most of the opium derivative, heroin (it takes about 10 kilograms of opium, plus chemicals, to produce one kilogram of heroin), finds its way to markets in China and India, with smaller quantities going to Bangladesh, Thailand, and Laos. Australia and Canada were previously important markets as well, but less Burmese heroin seems to be going there now.

Methamphetamines are exported mainly to Thailand but also to Laos and Cambodia as well as, more recently, Vietnam.

The civil war has also created a huge black arms market. Groups in Burma have bought weapons from Thailand or, in the case of the now-defunct Communist Party of Burma (CPB), received military equipment from China. As some of the old weapons have been replaced with new ones, armed groups in Burma—in particular, the United Wa State Army (UWSA), an ethnic successor to the CPB—have also begun to sell weapons to other nonstate actors in the region.

Furthermore, poverty and underdevelopment in Burma have forced thousands of young women into the sex industry in neighboring Thailand. Hundreds of thousands of Burmese men are also working, mostly illegally, in Thailand and, to a lesser extent, in Malaysia.

Narcotics

In 1989, the hill tribe rank and file of the CPB mutinied against the party's aging, mainly Burman-Maoist leadership. The leaders and their families, around 300 people, were driven into exile in China, where they still remain. The CPB's 20,000-strong army broke up into four regional armies based along ethnic lines. The most powerful of these is the UWSA, which controls a large swathe of territory along the Sino-Burmese border.

The CPB mutiny came less than a year after a massive pro-democracy uprising swept central Burma. When the army moved in to reassert power on September 18, 1988, hundreds, if not thousands, of protesters were gunned down. In the wake of the massacres in Rangoon and elsewhere in the country, more than 8,000 pro-democracy activists fled the urban centers for the border areas near Thailand, where a multitude of ethnic insurgencies were active. These Thai border-based groups (Karen, Mon, Karenni, Shan, and Pa-O), however, were unable to provide the urban dissidents with more than a handful of weapons. None of the ethnic armies could match the strength of the CPB, whose troops then controlled a 20,000 square kilometer territory along the Sino-Burmese border in the northeast. Unlike the ethnic insurgents, the CPB had vast quantities of arms and ammunition, which were supplied by China from 1968 to 1978 when it was Beijing's policy to support Communist insurrections in Southeast Asia. Although the aid had almost ceased by 1980, the CPB had enough munitions to last through at least 10 years of guerrilla warfare against the central government in Rangoon.

The Burmese military now feared a renewed, potentially dangerous insurgency along its frontiers: a possible alliance among the ethnic rebels, the pro-democracy activists from Rangoon and other towns and cities, and the new ethnic armies in the former CPB area. The "old" ethnic rebels sent a delegation from the Thai border to the area to negotiate with the CPB mutineers soon after the breakup of the old party, but the authorities in Rangoon reacted faster, with more determination, and with much more to offer than the ethnic rebels. Within weeks of the CPB mutiny, the chief of Burma's military intelligence, Major General Khin Nyunt, helicoptered up to the border areas to meet personally with the leaders of the mutiny.

Step by step, alliances of convenience were forged between Burma's military authorities and various groups of mutineers. In exchange for promises not to attack government forces and to sever ties with other rebel groups, the CPB mutineers were granted unofficial permission to engage in any kind of business to sustain themselves, which, in Burma's remote and underdeveloped hill areas, inevitably meant opium production. Rangoon also promised to launch a "border-development program" in the former CPB areas. The United Nations and its various agencies were invited to help fund those projects.

In the late 1980s, Burma's opium production suddenly more than doubled. According to the U.S. government, the 1987 harvest for Burma yielded 836 tons of raw opium; by 1995, production had increased to 2,340 tons. Satellite imagery showed that the area under poppy cultivation increased from 92,300 hectares in 1987 to 142,700 in 1989 and 154,000 in 1995.

The potential heroin output soared from 54 tons in 1987 to 166 tons in 1995, making drugs the impoverished and mismanaged country's only growth industry. At the same time, a string of new heroin refineries were set up in Kokang and the Wa hills, conveniently located near the main growing areas in northern Burma and, equally important, close to the rapidly growing Chinese drug market and seemingly easier routes through Yunnan to the outside world.

In the early 1990s, the same laboratories in northern Burma began to produce methamphetamines, which have become the drug of choice in the region. Millions of pills are being smuggled into Thailand every week, and methamphetamine abuse has become one of Thailand's most pressing social problems and has spread to Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and India. Burma has become the main supplier of methamphetamines to all its neighbors except China, which has its own production of amphetamine-type stimulants.

Burma's opium production has fallen significantly since the "boom years" of the 1990s, but it is still in the hundreds of tons, making it the world's largest opium producer after Afghanistan.

Weapons

In the late 1990s, UWSA troops were seen at the Burmese frontier town of Tamu on the Indian border. This was followed by an increasing flow of heroin and *yaa baa*¹ into the adjoining Indian state of Manipur. Not only drugs have been sold across the border to India but also guns. On June 24, 2008, the *Sentinel*, a local newspaper published in northeastern India, reported that the UWSA "is playing a major role in the trafficking of Chinese arms to the Northeast." The weaponry, the *Sentinel* reported, included Chinese-made Kalashnikovs and other automatic and semiautomatic rifles. A number of separatist insurgent groups are active in India's northeast, among them the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and various factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). There is no shortage of customers for guns—or drugs—in India's volatile northeast. The UWSA is more than willing to supply both to anyone who wants to buy their deadly wares. The guns are most likely obtained on the black market in China—or through UWSA contacts with officers in the People's Liberation Army (PLA)—and then resold to buyers in the region.

At the same time, the UWSA has been able to acquire more modern and sophisticated guns from China. Although the 1989 cease-fire with the government appears to be holding, the UWSA and other cease-fire groups have come under pressure from the government to surrender their weapons and transform their organizations into political parties. The pressure to do so increased after the May 2008 referendum on a new constitution, which will lead to a general election in 2010. The cease-fire groups are reluctant to comply with this request.

¹ *Yaa baa*, Thai for "crazy medicine," is a mixture of methamphetamine and caffeine.

Jane's Intelligence Review reported in its March 2008 issue: "As the possibility of a war with the junta has loomed larger, the UWSA has acquired more sophisticated weapons, including anti-aircraft systems. In or around 2000, the Wa added to their small arsenal of Soviet Strela-2 (SA-7) man-portable air defense systems when they acquired HN-5N systems, an improved Chinese version of the first-generation Soviet system."² The same source also stated that the UWSA has acquired 12.7 and 14.5 mm antiaircraft guns and 60 mm, 82 mm, and 120 mm mortars and claimed that in 2007, advisers from the PLA trained the UWSA in the use of 122 mm and 130 mm artillery in the Lu Fang mountain range west of Panghsang (UWSA headquarters).³ The UWSA's artillery regiment has been equipped with 130 mm field guns and 122 mm howitzers, and its soldiers have dug a complex of underground command centers near Panghsang clearly intended for protection against aerial attacks by the Burmese Air Force.

It is unclear if the UWSA had to pay for its new Chinese weapons, or if the PLA gave them freely. But in order to raise more money, for arms purchases and for running its administration, the UWSA has moved into the regional arms trade. Until recently, most of the arms that the UWSA sold to other regional insurgent groups were procured through Yunnan's underground markets, where ex-PLA personnel are known to have sold off munitions stockpiles without Beijing's approval. These activities intensified in Yunnan in the wake of Beijing's ambitious modernization campaign for its armed forces, which included strict orders for provincial PLA members to abandon their private business interests, including arms trading.

While various PLA units were reshaped and reequipped, many others, particularly in far-flung Yunnan, were reluctant to hand in officially retired arms because of their black market value in conflict-ridden neighboring Burma. The UWSA has long been involved in the lucrative underground regional arms trade, which according to security analysts has surpassed Cambodia's notorious arms bazaars in trade volume. In recent years, the UWSA is known to have sold assault rifles and explosives to various rebel groups, including the Naga along India's northeastern border with Myanmar, as well as possibly the Maoist rebels who in 2008 fought their way into government in Nepal. Said one Bangkok-based security analyst monitoring the situation: "The UWSA couldn't care less about the various ideologies of the groups they supply. They will continue to sell (arms) to whoever wants them as long as they don't expect to face off with the buyers in the near future."

The *Sentinel* also quoted an Indian intelligence source in its June 24, 2008, issue as saying that Chinese automatic rifles, which are available in Burma for \$500 each, are sold in northeastern India for \$2,500 a piece.

² Michael Black and Anthony Davis, "Wa and Peace—The UWSA and Tensions in Myanmar," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, March 1, 2008.

³ *Ibid.*

The Sex Trade

The number of commercial sex workers from Burma who are employed, full time or part time, in Thailand is not known; but thousands can be found in brothels in towns such as Mae Sai, Fang, Chiang Rai, and Chiang Mai in the north and Ranong in the south. Many have migrated to Thailand because of poverty, while others have been trafficked into the Thai sex industry, i.e., promised jobs in restaurants or factories and then sold to brothels. Commercial sex workers from Burma can also be found in Ruili and other Chinese border towns and in Johor in Malaysia.

The trafficking in sex workers is controlled by criminal syndicates, which seem to operate with impunity. Shady groups are also behind the export of illegal male workers to Thailand, where they find jobs in factories, construction sites, and the fishing industry.

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THE EXTREMIST THREAT IN AUSTRALIA

Sally Neighbour

The nature and extent of the extremist threat in Australia is illustrated most clearly by the recent conviction of seven men in Melbourne, who were found guilty in the country's largest terrorism trial of belonging to a terrorist organization that was plotting violent attacks in Australia.

Twelve men, including the group's Algerian-born leader, Abdul Nacer Benbrika (aka Abu Bakr), were tried. Seven were convicted, four were acquitted, and one is to face a retrial. Evidence was heard that the cell sought to obtain explosives and weapons, undertook paramilitary-style training, and discussed attacks on a range of targets, which were said to include Melbourne's West Gate Bridge, Crown Casino, and Australia's most iconic sports stadium, the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The Benbrika case—described as Australia's "most successful" terrorism prosecution—illustrates a number of important points:

- there *is* a very real threat in Australia—a fact that many people had begun to doubt after a series of failed terrorism prosecutions;
- how the threat has changed and evolved;
- how closely Australia mirrors rest of the world; and
- the threat in/to Australia has diminished in recent years.

The trial of Benbrika and his cohorts was the first of two trials to result from the investigation known as Operation Pendennis, in which a total of 22 men were arrested in Melbourne and Sydney in late 2005 and early 2006. A second trial is currently under way in Sydney, in which another five men are facing charges of conspiring to perform acts in preparation for a terrorist act. (Originally nine were charged. Three have pleaded guilty and a fourth is to be tried separately, having earlier been deemed mentally unfit to stand trial. A suppression order issued by the Supreme Court of New South Wales prohibits any link being made between the Melbourne and Sydney groups in public reporting of the two cases.)

Pendennis was Australia's largest terrorism investigation. It ran for more than 16 months, during which police and intelligence agents conducted more than 16,000 hours of electronic surveillance and intercepted 98,000 phone calls.

The evidence shows that the Benbrika group was a classic post-9/11 “homegrown” cell. Of the 12 men tried in Melbourne, only 2 were born overseas: Benbrika, who is from Algeria; and his so-called coordinator, Fadl Sayadi, who was born in Lebanon. The rest were all born in Australia.

Only one in the group had undertaken military training overseas. Australian-born Caucasian Muslim convert, Shane Kent, a 31-year-old father of three known among the group by his Muslim name Yasin, trained in Camp Faruq in Afghanistan in mid-2001, where he spent two months studying weapons, explosives, and topography. It was alleged by the prosecution that as a result of his training, Kent became a “valuable adviser” to Benbrika’s group. However, the evidence suggests that he was *not* a key member of the cell. He did not contribute to its *sanduk* (central fund); did not have an allocated role in the group or join in military-style training sessions in Australia; did not swear an oath of allegiance; and did not take part in discussions about killing people. In fact, in one intercepted conversation in which other group members were discussing jihad in Australia, Kent was heard to say: “It’s too hard doing anything in this country, they’re watching us.” A jury was unable to decide whether Kent was guilty of being a member of a terrorist group, and he will face a retrial.

Beyond this, there was no evidence presented that the Benbrika cell had any direct links to either al Qaeda central or other terrorist groups or individuals abroad. They had acquired the usual array of jihadi videos, books, and literature, mostly obtained over the Internet, and relied on Benbrika for spiritual and doctrinal advice.

As with other post-9/11 homegrown cells, the Benbrika group’s *modus operandi* marks a clear departure from that of earlier terrorist cells. By way of comparison, Australia’s first jihadi plot—the plan by British-born Australian Muslim convert Jack Roche to bomb the Israeli embassy in Canberra back in 2000—was a result of discussions in Afghanistan with the al Qaeda leadership. This was back in the days—only eight years ago—when al Qaeda central provided training, funding, and approval for such attacks. In contrast, the Benbrika cell and its plans were entirely conceived in Australia.

In many ways, the cell mirrors the characteristics of other homegrown groups. These were not individuals who were unemployed, impoverished, or oppressed. With the exception of Kent, who was employed as a Web site designer, they worked mostly in the technical trades: a plumber, an apprentice electrician, a panel beater. Again with the exception of Kent, they were all from immigrant families, removed from the culture of their forebears, and alienated to some extent from the broader Australian society by virtue of their strong identification with Islam. They were all between 15 and 25 years younger than their leader, Benbrika, on whom they relied for inspiration and religious guidance. One of the youngest, 23-year-old Abdullah Merhi, saw Benbrika as a father figure after the death of his own father in 2003. An apprentice electrician and junior football champion, it was alleged that Merhi offered himself up for martyrdom, although he was acquitted on this charge.

They were motivated, according to the evidence, by Australia’s foreign policy, specifically its involvement in the war in Iraq. Benbrika told them it was *halal* to carry out violent jihad in

Australia, as Australia was a “land of war” because it had sent troops to invade Iraq. It should be noted that it was a largely circumstantial case, based primarily on a lot of talk about what they might or would like to do.

A phone intercept captured the following exchange, in which Benbrika and Merhi discussed carrying out an attack similar to the March 2004 train bombings in Madrid:

Benbrika: “You shouldn’t just do, kill one or two or three, you need some good... like close to the station, the train...”

Merhi: “yeah like what’s been going on in...”

Benbrika: “do a big thing”

Merhi: “like Spain”

Benbrika: “When you in here, in Australia, when you do something they stop to send the troops. If you kill, we kill, here a thousand, the government is going to think...”

Merhi: “bring the troops home, because if you get large numbers here, a thousand, the government will listen.”

There was also this chilling exchange:

Merhi: “If for example John Howard kills innocent family, Muslim... Do we, we will make transgress back to him? Do we have to kill him and his family or can we just kill his people like people at the football.”

Benbrika: “If they kill our kids we kill little kids.”

Merhi: “The innocent ones?”

Benbrika: “The innocent ones. Because he kills our innocent ones.”

The fact of such a conspiracy in Australia should come as no surprise. It was just the latest in a long series of attempts by al Qaeda and others who share its ideology to target Australia.

Australia has been named repeatedly in al Qaeda documents and broadcasts as a high-priority target. There was Jack Roche’s plan to bomb the Israeli embassy in Canberra, inspired by al Qaeda in Afghanistan in 2000. After it failed to eventuate, Hambali and Khalid Sheik Mohammed held further discussions on attacking Jewish targets in Australia. In 2003, another Australian convert, Jack Thomas, who also trained in Camp Faruq, was told in Pakistan by al Qaeda operative Khalid bin Attash that Osama bin Laden wanted a “white boy” in Australia to carry out an attack similar to the 1998 African embassy bombings. Later, the Frenchman Willie Brigitte told his interrogators that he was sent to Australia in 2003 to carry out “an attack of great size.” In 2006, Brigitte’s accomplice Fahim Lodhi was convicted in Sydney on three charges, including an act in preparation for a terrorist attack.

In short, the targeting of Australia is nothing new. Given this history, it is logical to assume that there will be further attempts to attack Australia. The question is: when/will they succeed?

The heads of Australian policing and intelligence agencies have stated in the past that they believed it was “inevitable” that at some point an attack would take place on Australian soil. There is still a strong possibility of this. However, I believe that there are signs that the threat may have receded:

- no further arrests or plots uncovered since the arrest of Benbrika and his accomplices in late 2005/early 2006;
- the foreign policy shift brought on by the change of government/end of the Howard era—although this may have negligible impact in the short term; and
- extremely vigilant—to the point of heavy-handedness—counterterrorism policing has had a strong deterrent effect.

It needs to be noted that the threat in/to Australia has been exaggerated—and at times shamelessly exploited—in a highly charged political environment under the umbrella of the “war on terror,” particularly under the previous government led by Prime Minister John Howard. A corollary of this has been some extremely heavy-handed counterterrorism policing, which has served to further distort the threat.

The distortion can be seen in the Australian statistics on terrorism arrests. Since 9/11 and Bali, 32 people have been arrested and charged under the new antiterrorism laws, of which no fewer than 44 have been passed in the last six years.

Marc Sageman has previously compared the rate of terrorism-related arrests per capita in Australia to that in the United States and the United Kingdom/Europe and concluded on this basis that the extremist threat is higher in Australia than in the United States but lower than in the United Kingdom and Europe. The conventional wisdom on this is that there are more angry Muslims per capita in Australia than in the United States, because Australian Muslims are socioeconomically more disadvantaged and socially and politically less integrated than their Muslim counterparts in the United States. The reverse is true if you compare Australia with the United Kingdom. I agree with Sageman’s assessment.

However, we also need to examine the results of the charges laid in Australia—from which a rather different picture emerges. Of the 32 people charged, 19 have been dealt with by the courts. Of those 19, 10 were convicted, while the other 9 were either acquitted or had their charges dismissed: a success rate of barely 50 percent. The failures include a string of conspicuously badly handled cases, the most recent being the arrest last year of Indian-born doctor Mohammed Haneef, who was detained in Queensland in connection with the failed terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom in June 2007. The charge against Haneef was dropped when the director of public prosecutions decided that there was insufficient evidence to support it; in truth, there was no evidence at all. The Haneef case is currently the subject of a judicial inquiry.

In conclusion, the extremist threat in and to Australia is real and needs to be acknowledged and addressed. There remains a distinct possibility of an attack on Australian soil. However, in my view, the threat has diminished in the past three to four years. We have reason to be alert, but not alarmed.

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MUSLIM ALIENATION IN AUSTRALIA: EUROPE DOWN UNDER?

Waleed Aly

In November 2007, the new director-general of MI-5, Jonathan Evans, gave his first public speech in spectacular style. Evans's portrait of the British counterterrorism landscape contained two quite shocking claims. First, that there are at least 2,000—and perhaps up to 4,000—individuals in Britain who pose “a direct threat to national security and public safety, because of their support for terrorism.” Evans' second claim was that “terrorists are methodically and intentionally ... radicalizing, indoctrinating and grooming” people “as young as 15 and 16” for terrorist activity. Moreover, he noted, the scope of the threat was only growing.

That sort of snapshot inevitably rattles nerves in Australia. But the truth is that viewed from Down Under, Evans's comments appear almost surreal. Contemplating the British terrain makes plain how comparatively limited the problem of terrorism is in Australia. Public estimates of the number of potential Australian terrorists are inevitably watery, but the most informed of them suggests a figure in the tens, not the thousands. Since September 11, 2001, Britain has seen more than 200 convictions on terrorism-related charges. Australia has just witnessed the conclusion of the biggest terrorism trial in its history—which resulted in seven convictions. Barely a handful of other convictions have been secured, and about a dozen more are currently facing charges. Meanwhile, British police say that they are monitoring 500 people involved in at least 80 terror plots. The difference in magnitude is staggeringly vast.

There are some obvious explanations for the substantial difference between the Australian and British terrains. Britain experiences far greater flows of immigration, which in turn has included many more radical ideologues in recent decades than is the case in Australia. It is certainly true that Australia's recently convicted terrorist leader, Abdul Nacer Benbrika, was a migrant. But it is unclear that his neo-jihadi form of radicalization was complete at the point of his migration, and even if it was, he is clearly not of the ilk of figures such as Abu Qatada. This is not simply a function of differing immigration policies—though this is clearly a factor—but of more insurmountable differences between the two nations. Britain lies at the heart of Western Europe. It is the seat of a modern empire and colonial power. It is more conspicuous on the international political stage and geographically closer to the Middle East and the political action generally. It is vastly more symbolic of Western civilization. In short, Britain is innately a bigger target for anti-Western terrorism than Australia. Such terrorists have far more reason to pass through Britain than Australia.

But as the London bombings of July 7, 2005, made frighteningly plain, immigration simply does not account for the terrorist threat currently facing Western countries. Evans's grim estimation does not warn of a growing threat posed by migrants, but by locally born and raised individuals. If we accept that radicalization is not a condition inherited at birth, but rather one borne of experiences, then it is the *British* experiences of these youths that have been formative—not those of a war-torn “home” country. The very nub of homegrown radicalization is that something has intervened to reconstruct the radical's identity in a way that makes them think of themselves as external to the nation-state in which they were born and raised.

That, by definition, is a form of alienation. It is almost trite to say that alienation from the target society is a prerequisite for a person to undertake violence against it. Put another way, it is difficult to conceive of a person attacking a society with which they identify in any meaningful way. Of course, that says little about the form that this alienation may take. It does not necessarily imply a friendless, lonely, difficult social existence or experiences of bullying at school. Certainly, such alienating experiences may be relevant—and there seems to be a relatively common thread of experienced racism among radicals in Britain. But this clearly does not describe the experiences of every would-be terrorist. For some, alienation may be a more principled matter. A strong commitment to social justice, for example, if it precipitates a sufficiently strong perception of gross injustice in society, may similarly manifest itself in alienation. The extent of alienation will probably determine whether the person in question is likely to seek to address their grievances through existing structures or to seek to force some kind of social change through the use of violence.

In the case of homegrown Islamist terrorism, some form of identity politics is required to project local senses of alienation onto global horizons. A useful illustrative example here might be Mohammed Bouyeri, whose murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh is most accurately characterized as a terrorist attack. Bouyeri was clearly disillusioned with the Dutch political terrain, which he perceived to be vehemently anti-Muslim. Prior to the attack, for example, the Dutch government had adopted an aggressively assimilationist discourse toward Muslims, expressed finally in the deportation of 26,000 people, some of whom had been living in the Netherlands for more than five years. This sort of domestic policy greatly angered Bouyeri.

Van Gogh was a substitute target. Bouyeri would have preferred to kill a Dutch politician who he regarded as being anti-Muslim but found this too difficult. His primary grievances were not against van Gogh's anti-Islamic film, *Submission*, but against the broader Dutch political environment. When finally Dutch troops were sent to Iraq, Bouyeri had a narrative of global persecution at his disposal that connected the suffering of Iraqi Muslims with his own sense of domestic alienation. Accordingly, he saw himself as a soldier in a global war against Muslims. Alienated from Dutch society, he found a more profound sense of belonging in the construction of a global persecuted community, in relation to which the Netherlands was playing an oppressive role.

Naturally, there are many variables that may determine whether a person experiences alienation serious enough to matriculate into violence, just as there are many pathways to such alienation. Exposure to conflictual, separatist rhetoric may have an impact in encouraging people to adopt an alienated orientation. This may account for the differences emerging between radicalization in Europe and in Australia to some extent—after all, the greater presence of radical preachers in Europe must have had some impact—but there are several reasons why this might be overstated. One is that global media has given Australian Muslims broad access to the full range of ideological resources necessary for radicalism. But more fundamentally, this ideological element cannot operate in a vacuum. Similarly, radical figures have operated in the United States, yet the problem of homegrown terrorism pales into insignificance when compared with Britain. This suggests that there might be some environmental factor that gives radical, separatist ideologies less resonance in Australia (and the United States) than they have in Europe. That is to say, the environment is less conducive to alienation.

That much seems plain, even among some radicals. The first Islamists to be convicted on terrorism offences in Australia were Jack Roche and Jack Thomas (though Thomas's conviction was overturned on appeal, and proceedings are ongoing). These people's stories themselves are quite instructive. Roche was finally imprisoned after turning himself in to the authorities repeatedly. That is to say, he willingly, and unilaterally, aborted his plan to attack the Israeli embassy in Australia. In Thomas's case, there is no evidence of his intention to take part in a specific attack. He was initially convicted of accepting money from a terrorist organization (in addition to some other more minor crimes), but not for any actions of direct violence. The money in question was to pay for his airfare home, having spent time in an al Qaeda training camp. Thomas asserts that he accepted the money because he was not interested in pursuing any terrorist attacks—especially against his own country—and it was the easiest way for him to get home at that stage.

Both of these are stories of those who turned away from terrorism at the last moment, apparently feeling the restraint of some psychological force. To express this in the terms of this paper, they were insufficiently alienated from Australian society to undertake an attack within its borders. Especially in the case of Thomas, it seems that, to some extent, he still identified as an Australian. The seven recently convicted terrorists based in Melbourne—the only Islamists so far convicted with (extremely embryonic) plans to attack Australia—appear to stem from more deprived sectors of society. Although no researchers have yet had sustained access to them, making it difficult to assess what level and kind of alienation they might have experienced, the little information we do have suggests that they might conform to the more typical profile of social disenfranchisement.

There may be many reasons why the scope of the security threat in Australia is so markedly different from that of Europe, and why alienation in Australia is considerably less common. Allow me to venture one that, in my estimation, is likely to be among the most significant.

“New World” societies such as the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada tend to have more fluid notions of national identity than do nations in the European “Old World.” That is not to say that New World identity is completely without boundaries or form, just that they are better equipped to accommodate cultural and religious diversity. In Europe, this has its roots in the mythology that surrounded the creation of nation-states following the treaty of Westphalia. That mythology held that each nation was constituted of people who were essentially similar to each other and essentially different from those beyond its borders. Put in more concrete terms, there was something innately Germanic about the Germans, innately Spanish about the Spanish, innately British about the British—and that each was different from the other. Within each nation-state, a level of homogeneity was assumed—and often brought about by force and violence. The nation was home to a uniform culture, language, ethnicity, and religion, and its people shared a uniform history.

This mythology has played an important cohesive role in the Westphalian age. However, the modern phenomenon of rapidly increasing migration flows sits uneasily with it. Where the identity of the nation-state assumes a cultural and hereditary uniformity, the process of migration integration is made correspondingly more difficult. A rigid, ethnic, and culturally specific national identity is a barrier to belonging for those who do not (and cannot ever) share the relevant ethnicity or cultural background. An example of this, borne out in the work of researchers such as Farhad Khosrokhavar, is the experience of the grandchildren of North African migrants in France, who in spite of their place of birth and fluent French (often being far more fluent than their Arabic), find it difficult to find acceptance in society as genuinely French. Being French is bound up in so many specific and unattainable traits that it becomes an inaccessible identity to many in these communities. Alienation is a predictable consequence, and the generation of hostile counteridentities follows.

The New World is better placed to avoid these problems because their national identities are themselves informed by the migrant experience. These are Western nations by migration, not geography. It is possible for anyone to become an American or an Australian in a way that is not unequivocally true in Europe. Cultural and religious diversity, while not always warmly accepted by everyone, is a more widely lived fact of life in the New World. Acceptance—not as a foreign presence but as part of the nation—is more easily found.

This sets in motion a range of social dynamics far more conducive to social cohesion and more resistant to the development of broad alienation. New World societies, for example, are likely to provide greater social mobility (although difficulties on racial fault lines remain present in the United States and Australia). Class structures are more easily dissolved. The New World has no history as a colonial power in the lands of its migrants and therefore escapes the potential for alienation borne of historical baggage, even if this advantage is being eroded somewhat by more recent foreign policy decisions.

Obviously, none of this does, or could ever, eradicate alienation among members of society. Similarly, it is not remotely a guarantee that such societies are protected from terrorism. But it

should be borne in mind—consistent with the psychological model of radicalization provided by Fathali Moghaddam—that large numbers of people must first be alienated before a few will graduate to terrorism. Australia’s ability to limit the numbers of the alienated is therefore a major contributor to its relatively modest threat profile. Its national identity structures vary significantly from those that may be found in Europe.

17

JIHADI IDEOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW

Muhammad Haniff Hassan

Introduction

The ideology that underlies jihadi terrorism is central in two ways. First, it provides the core reason for jihadi groups to exist, offering a clear vision and set of objectives. Second, it legitimizes acts of terrorism and becomes a means to win sympathy, support, and recruits from the community. This legitimacy not only enhances the group's capability but also provides sustainability. Ideology also drives the evolution from collective action to individual action, which stems from ideological belief.

The centrality of ideology to jihadi groups leads many to argue that the key to defeating this trend is the formulation of an effective counterideology. The development of an effective counterideology must be rooted in a thorough understanding of the ideological foundations of jihadi groups. This is especially true of al Qaeda and its regional affiliates, like Jemaah Islamiyah. A comprehensive understanding of jihadists' beliefs will facilitate an effective response to these groups and inform the development of tools to monitor ideas on the ground. As Sun Tzu noted in *The Art of War*, "know your enemy and know yourself."

This paper seeks to offer a brief overview of jihadi ideology. Since space limitations prohibit a more comprehensive analysis, the paper will focus on three critical components. These include the relationship with the "other," the necessity of power, and jihad. These three components were selected because they play the most important role in the violent conduct of jihadists.

For the purposes of this article, jihadist refers to a person who subscribes to jihadism, which is defined as an ideological commitment to the establishment of an all encompassing Islamic state through violent jihad.¹

There are many jihadi groups operating in various parts of the world. Some are local in character and mission, restricting their political objectives to certain national boundaries. Others are

¹ Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 4; Gilles Kepel, *The Roots of Radical Islam* (London: Saqi Books, 2005), 15; Jalil Roshandal and Saron Chadha, *Jihad and International Security* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 10; and Walid Phares, *Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies Against America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 59.

transnational. Al Qaeda is regarded as the most dangerous jihadi group due both to its transnational character and its violent track record, demonstrated most notoriously by the September 11 attacks. Al Qaeda is thus regarded as today's primary threat to international peace and security.²

Jihadists and the Non-Muslim “Other”

Jihadists' view toward the “other” is fundamentally negative. This view originates from the belief that Islam requires Muslims to believe that Islam is the only true religion recognized by God (Allah) (Qur'an 3:19, 3:85). Jihadists consider Islam the sole religion for all mankind (39:3). *Kufr* (disbelieving) is regarded as the gravest sin in the eye of God (31:13, 4:48, 98:6, 5:72, 18:110), as Muslims are commanded to enjoin good and forbid evil (3:104, 3:110). Jihadists believe that a Muslim's attitude toward evil is stipulated by the Prophet: “Anyone among you sees disobedience to God (*munkar*), should change it with his hand. If he is not able to, then with his tongue (advice). If he is not able to, then change it in his heart (boycott). That is the weakest of faith.” To the jihadist, there is no good that is greater than bringing people to the fold of Islam, and there is no greater evil that Muslims must forbid than *kufr*. Allowing non-Muslims to practice their religions freely in public is considered a negation to the command that all mankind must submit to Allah only (51:56).

Jihadists Perception of Non-Muslim Hostility toward Islam

The jihadists' extremist interpretation of the Qur'an also informs their understanding of non-Muslim attitudes toward Islam. According to their interpretation, non-Muslims will never be pleased until all Muslims abandon their religion and follow an un-Islamic way of life (2:109, 2:120, 4:89). Outsiders are seen as sharing a common hatred of Islam that prompts them to conspire against, subvert, or attack the faith at every opportunity (2:9, 2:105, 2:217, 9:8, 5:82, 63:7–8, 3:69). Because outsiders will use treachery and every means at their disposal to destroy Islam (3:118–120, 2:75–77), Muslims are enjoined to be wary of and firm toward non-Muslims (48:29, 5:54, 63:4).

In jihadi discourse, the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is always in conflict due to fundamental differences between these communities. Muslim life is based on full submission (*ubudiyah*) to God, while non-Muslims live a life based on submission (*ubudiyah*) to fellow

² Shaul Meshal and Maoz Rosenthal, “Al-Qaeda as a Dune Organization: Toward a Typology of Islamic Terrorist Organizations,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 4:275–293; and Roshandal and Chadha, *Jihad and International Security*, 17–37, 81.

humans or false gods.³ Jihadists use historical events to support this view. These include the conspiracy between pagan Arabs and Jews against the Prophet, an example that ignores the special status Jews are afforded in Islam as “people of the book.” The crusades and Western European colonization of Muslim lands are also cited, as are more contemporary examples of Muslim suffering at the hands of Communists, Hindus, or Christians in China, Kashmir, the former Yugoslavia, and elsewhere.⁴

Al-wala’ (Allegiance) and *Al-Bara’* (Disassociation) Doctrine

Al-wala’ is defined as total loyalty and allegiance to God alone, while *al-bara’* translates as total disassociation from all that displeases God. Because jihadists believe that God only favors Islam and its followers, jihadi ideology dictates that Muslims must faithfully conform to the teachings of Islam and enjoy the fellowship of brother Muslims. A Muslim’s faith, however, will not be complete by upholding *al-wala’* alone. According to jihadi belief, the devout Muslim must also practice *al-bara’*.⁵ This means that Muslims must disassociate themselves from all that is related with *kufur*, including the *kuffar* (infidels), with whom God is displeased (60:4, 19:49-51, 11:54-56, 43:26-28, 10:41).⁶

Jihadists believe that Muslims should not associate themselves with the *kuffar* so that they can avoid anything that may dilute their religious identity and sacrifice Islamic principles. This doctrine, made necessary by non-Muslims’ perceived hostility toward Muslims, strongly discourages any fraternity with *kuffar* (3:118-120, 8-72-73, 3:28, 4:89, 5:51). Instead, Muslims are encouraged to distinguish themselves from unbelievers and to avoid non-Muslim forms of dress, hairstyle, or behavior (5:51).

Living with unbelievers in a Muslim country is strongly discouraged, while living in or traveling to a non-Muslim country is allowed only under strict conditions. It must be done for the purpose of *da’wah* (propagation), for instance, or with an assurance that their faith will not be compromised. Coexistence with the *kuffar* in a non-Islamic environment may deny a Muslim God’s “paradise in the afterlife” (4:97-99).⁷

³ Sayyid Qutb, *Fi zilal al-Quran* [Under the shades of the Qur’an], *Dar asy-syuruq* 3 (1985): 1586-1587. See also Sayyid Qutb commentary on offensive jihad in the same book, 1431-1452.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1593; Hizb ut-Tahrir, *The Inevitability of the Clash of the Civilisation* (London: Al-Khilafah, 2002), 28-39.

⁵ Muhammad Sa’id Salim Al-Qahtani, *Al-wala’ wa al-bara’ fi al-Islam* [Allegiance and non-allegiance in Islam] (Riyadh: Dar Tayyibah, 1983), 89-94, 137-46.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 137-146

⁷ *Ibid.*, 224, 234, 246-247, 272-290, 306-309, 321-342; See also, Shaykh Saalih bin Fawzaan Al-Fawzaan, “Al-walaa’ wal-baraa’” [Allegiance and association with the people of Islaam and emaan and disassociation

Muslims are enjoined to treat unbelievers kindly and justly but must do so without establishing fraternity with them. Muslims are also allowed to benefit from non-Muslims and to learn from them in the fields of science and technology (60:8–9).⁸

The Ultimatum: Embrace Islam, Submit under Islam’s Rule, or War

Chapter 9 of the Qur’an contains a revelation that calls on Muslims to wage unconditional war against unbelievers. Jihadists believe that this abrogates other verses limiting jihad to self-defense, as well as those that dictate tolerance toward non-Muslims.⁹

Verse 5 of the chapter stipulates that the peace treaties with pagan Arabs should be considered null and void and that the pagans should be made to embrace Islam or face war. Verse 29 of the chapter allows a special concession for non-Muslims to remain with their faith, but only if they agree to submit to the rule of Islam.

The practice of giving the ultimatum can also be seen in many of the *hadiths* (Prophet’s traditions). One *hadith* records the Prophet’s instruction to his military commanders:

Fight with the name of God and in the path of God. Combat those who disbelieve in God. Fight, yet do not cheat, do not break trust, do not mutilate, do not kill minors.

If thou encounter an enemy from among the [infidels], then offer them three alternatives. Whichever of these they may accept, agree to it and withhold thyself from them.

So call them to embrace Islam. If they accept, then agree to it and withhold thyself from them. Then ask them to quit their territory in order to immigrate into the territory of the

and enmity with the people of falsehood and disbelief in Islaam], Calgary Islamic, <http://www.calgaryislam.com/imembers/pdf/manhaj/16.pdf> (accessed April 10, 2007).

⁸ Ibid., 364–371.

⁹ Osama bin Laden, “Declaration of War Against Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places,” PBS Online Newshour, August 1996, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html; “World Islamic Front Statement on Jihad against Jews and Crusaders,” *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* (London), February 23, 1998; Osama bin Laden, interview by Tayseer Alouni, Al Jazeera, October 2001; “Bin Laden’s Warning: Full Text,” BBC News, October 9, 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1585636.stm; *Sout Al-Jihad*, no. 3 (2003): 18, 25–30; Muhammad Abdul Salam Al-Farj, *Al-jihad: al-faridhah al-ghaibah* [Jihad: the neglected obligation] (n.p.: 1982). Al-Farj was a leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad Organization, which Ayman Al-Zawahiri also belonged to before its merger with al Qaeda. The book was the organization’s primary reference of its ideology. Al Qaeda in Iraq, *Limaza nuqatil? Man nuqatil?* [Why we fight? Who we fight?], June 2005, <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=3421> (accessed January 5, 2006); and Hamd bin Abdullah Al-Humaidi, *Hatta la tasma’ li al-jihad munadiyan* [So you will not hear a caller of jihad], July 17, 2002, <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=749> (accessed January 5, 2006).

migrants [i.e. the Muslim state], and inform them that if they do that they will have same rights as the migrants and same obligations as they. If they refuse to migrate, then inform them that they will be considered as [nomadic] Muslims, the same Divine laws being obligatory on them as on other Believers, except that they will not benefit by booty and other state income unless they join forces and fight along the Muslims.

If however they refuse, then call them to pay *Jizyah* [protection tax]. If they accept, then agree to it and withhold thyself from them.

If they refuse, then seek help from God and combat them...¹⁰

According to the revelation of Chapter 9, armed jihad is understood as a standing obligation for Muslims until all lands submit to the rule of Islam. Accordingly, jihadists consider armed conflict to be the basis of the relationship between Muslims and unbelievers. Muslims are similarly prohibited from entering into permanent peace agreements with non-Muslim countries.

According to the jihadists, peace agreements should not exceed 10 years, as was the practice of the Prophet during the Treaty of Hudaibiyah with the pagan Arabs of Mecca.¹¹

The Necessity of Power

Two ideas are central to the jihadi understanding of the necessity of power. First, they argue that Muslims are obligated to rule by the laws of God, Shari'a. Because the implementation of God's law cannot be fully realized until Muslims are in power, an expressly Islamic state is necessary to implement God's will.

Second, because Islam is the sole religion for all mankind, jihadi groups believe that Muslims are obligated to ensure that Islam prevails above all other religions or ideologies and that all mankind submits to Islam. Political power is the essential means to achieve this aim.¹²

Although this belief informs a critical aspect of jihadi ideology, it is important to note that not all who subscribe to this view should be regarded as jihadists. There are many Muslims who desire an expressly Islamic state but seek to achieve it through peaceful or democratic means. These

¹⁰ Muhammad Hamidullah, *The Muslim Conduct of State* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1987), 299.

¹¹ Majid Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybani's Siyar* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1966), 16–17.

¹² Kepel, *The Roots of Radical Islam*, 41–59; Mark A. Gabriel, *Journey Into the Mind of an Islamic Terrorist* (Lake Mary, Fla.: FrontLine, 2006), 65, 79, 81, 84, 89, and 93; Roshandal and Chadha, *Jihad and International Security*, 52–53, 57, 62–63; and National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2004), 50–51.

individuals may be defined as Islamists. From an ideological perspective, jihadists and Islamists are differentiated by their understanding of jihad.¹³

Jihadist and Jihad

Jihadists subscribe instead to the idea of perpetual war between Muslims and unbelievers. They believe that non-Muslims will never allow Muslims to live in peace and view violent jihad as the essential relationship between the faithful and unbelievers. To the jihadist, armed jihad is a standing obligation until the end of the world that will continue until all lands submit to the rule of Islam. The basis of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims can only be war, not peace. Only violent jihad can realize the supremacy of Islam.¹⁴ According to al Qaeda's leader, Osama bin Laden, "There is no way to obtain faithful strength but by returning to this jihad."¹⁵

Important in today's context is the jihadi interpretation of jihad as a *fardhu ain* (personal obligation), required of all Muslims to combat enemy occupation of Muslim lands. In the minds of jihadists, these lands refer not only to Palestine, Iraq, or Afghanistan but also lands that were previously part of the Islamic caliphate or ruled by Muslims. These include a variety of areas that extend from Andalusia, modern Spain, to Mindanao. The extremists contend that jihad must be waged until all of these lands return to the *dar al-Islam* (land of Islam).

Jihadists also argue that targeting civilians and noncombatants during jihad is justified for three reasons. First, because the enemy has shed the blood of Muslim civilians, jihadists are taking appropriate vengeance by attacking enemy civilians. Second, because enemy civilians vote for their leaders and finance aggression against Muslims through their taxes, jihadi action against them is permissible. The third and final reason why jihadists argue that targeting civilians is acceptable is that such actions are a necessary or inevitable evil for a greater good.

As for suicide bombings, jihadi groups generally regard them as *amaliyat isytsiyhadiah* (martyrdom operations) rather than suicide. Al Qaeda's endorsement of "martyrdom operations" is clear, in both word and deed. Bin Laden specifically addressed this issue in one of his statements: "We stress the importance of the martyrdom operations against the enemy—

¹³ Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 117; Meghnad Desai, *Rethinking Islamism: The Ideology of the New Terror* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 23–27; and Roshandal and Chadha, *Jihad and International Security*, 11.

¹⁴ *Sout Al-Jihad*, no. 7 (2003–2004): 26–27; *Sout Al-Jihad*, no. 19 (2004–2005): 37–38; Mark A. Gabriel, *Journey Into the Mind of an Islamic Terrorist*, 95, 102–105; and Roshandal and Chadha, *Jihad and International Security*, 6, 44–49

¹⁵ Osama bin Laden, interviewed by Peter Arnett, CNN, March 1997.

operations that inflicted harm on the United States and Israel that have been unprecedented in their history, thanks to Almighty God.”¹⁶

Three characteristics of jihadi ideology stand out: the binary view of “us versus them,” or *dar al-Islam* versus *dar al-harb* (land of war); a conspiratorial bent; and broad generalization. Bin Laden exemplifies these traits when he notes, “these incidents divide the world into two regions: one of faith where there is no hypocrisy and another of infidelity.”¹⁷

The alliance of Jews and Christians against Muslims is a constant theme in jihadi rhetoric. Jews and Christians are viewed from a generalized perspective, ignoring the heterogeneity and pluralistic nature of those communities.¹⁸ International institutions including the United Nations and its conventions are accordingly viewed with cynicism and seen as little more than tools of the “crusader-Zionist” effort against Islam. Bin Laden illustratively offered an award for the killing of the UN secretary-general.¹⁹

From a broad rhetorical perspective, ideological jihadists are committed to not only defensive jihad to recover lost Muslim lands but also offensive jihad to subject new lands to Islamic authority. The jihadi propensity for violence is further exacerbated by a binary worldview that marries a conspiratorial bent with an inherent hostility toward nonbelievers. As Jason Burke noted of al Qaeda, it is “less an organization than an ideology,”²⁰ a view that is shared by many other scholars.²¹ Jihadi ideology explains in large part the danger that al Qaeda poses to international peace.

¹⁶ “Bin Laden Tape: Text,” BBC News, February 12, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2751019.stm; Gabriel, *Journey Into the Mind of an Islamic Terrorist*, 53–55; and Roshandal and Chadha, *Jihad and International Security*, 82–86.

¹⁷ “Bin Laden Rails against Crusaders and UN,” BBC News, November 3, 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/media_reports/1636782.stm; “Bin Laden’s Warning: Full Text,” BBC News, October 7, 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1585636.stm; see also, Roshandal and Chadha, *Jihad and International Security*, 62.

¹⁸ Osama bin Laden, “Declaration of War Against Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places”; “World Islamic Front Statement on Jihad against Jews and Crusaders,” *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* (London); Osama bin Laden, interview by Tayseer Alouni, Al Jazeera, October 2001; “Bin Laden Rails against Crusaders and UN,” BBC News; “Bin Laden’s Warning: Full Text,” BBC News; *Sout Al-Jihad*, no. 17:36; *Sout Al-Jihad*, no. 18 (2004–2005): 46–47; Gabriel, *Journey Into the Mind of an Islamic Terrorist*, 87–88; and Roshandal and Chadha, *Jihad and International Security*, 60–61.

¹⁹ Osama bin Laden, interview by John Miller, ABC News, May 1998; Osama bin Laden, audio tape translated by Naouar Bioud, CBS News, May 6, 2004; and “Purported bin Laden Tape Offers Gold for Bremer,” CNN, May 7, 2004.

²⁰ Jason Burke, “Think Again: Al Qaeda,” *Foreign Policy* (May/June 2004): 18–19; Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), xxv–xxvi.

²¹ Meshal and Rosenthal, “Al Qaeda as a Dune Organization: Toward a Typology of Islamic Terrorist Organizations”; Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*, 170; Desai,

Conclusion

Today, jihadi ideology has lifted the movement to new levels of prominence. Information and communication technology, particularly the Internet, have facilitated the dissemination and accessibility of jihadi ideology. It inspires youths who are increasingly frustrated with world events to take the path of terrorism, without necessarily belonging to any jihadi group.

Increasingly, the world witnesses acts of terrorism in the name of jihad by an individual or individuals acting as an ad hoc group. This kind of activism is exemplified by the bombings in Madrid on March 11, 2004; the attack in London on July 7, 2005; and the attempted car bombings in London and Glasgow International Airport in June 2007. On June 2, 2007, security forces in Singapore announced that a Singaporean detained on his way to wage jihad against coalition forces in Afghanistan claimed that radical ideas that he retrieved from the Internet influenced his decision to fight.²²

Rethinking Islamism: The Ideology of the New Terror, viii; and Australian Government, *Protecting Australia Against Terrorism* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2006), 8.

²² Aidan Kirby, "The London Bombers as 'Self Starters': A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 5:426; M.E. Bowman, "Some-Time, Part-Time and One-Time Terrorism," *Intelligencer: Journal of U.S. Intelligence Studies* 13, no. 2 (Winter/Spring 2003): 16–18; Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), 265–269; Ted G. Groetzl, "Terrorist Beliefs and Terrorist Lives" in *Psychology of Terrorism*, ed. Chris E. Stout (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), 109; Petter Nesser, "Jihadism in Western Europe After the Invasion of Iraq: Tracing Motivational Influences from the Iraq War on Jihadist Terrorism in Western Europe," *Studies of Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 4:329, 334; Meshal and Rosenthal, "Al-Qaeda as a Dune Organization: Toward a Typology of Islamic Terrorist Organizations"; Peter Mascini, "Can the Violent Jihad Do Without Sympathizers?," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 4:351; Jarret M. Brachman and William McCants, "Stealing al Qaeda's Playbook," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 4:316; Edward Newman, "Exploring the 'Root Causes' of Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 8:753; Fawaz A. Gerges, *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy* (New York: Harcourt, 2006), 20–39; Roshandal and Chadha, *Jihad and International Security*, 106–117, 122–128; and Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs, "Further Detentions, Releases & Issuance of Restriction Orders under the Internal Security Act," press release, Singapore, June 8, 2007.



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