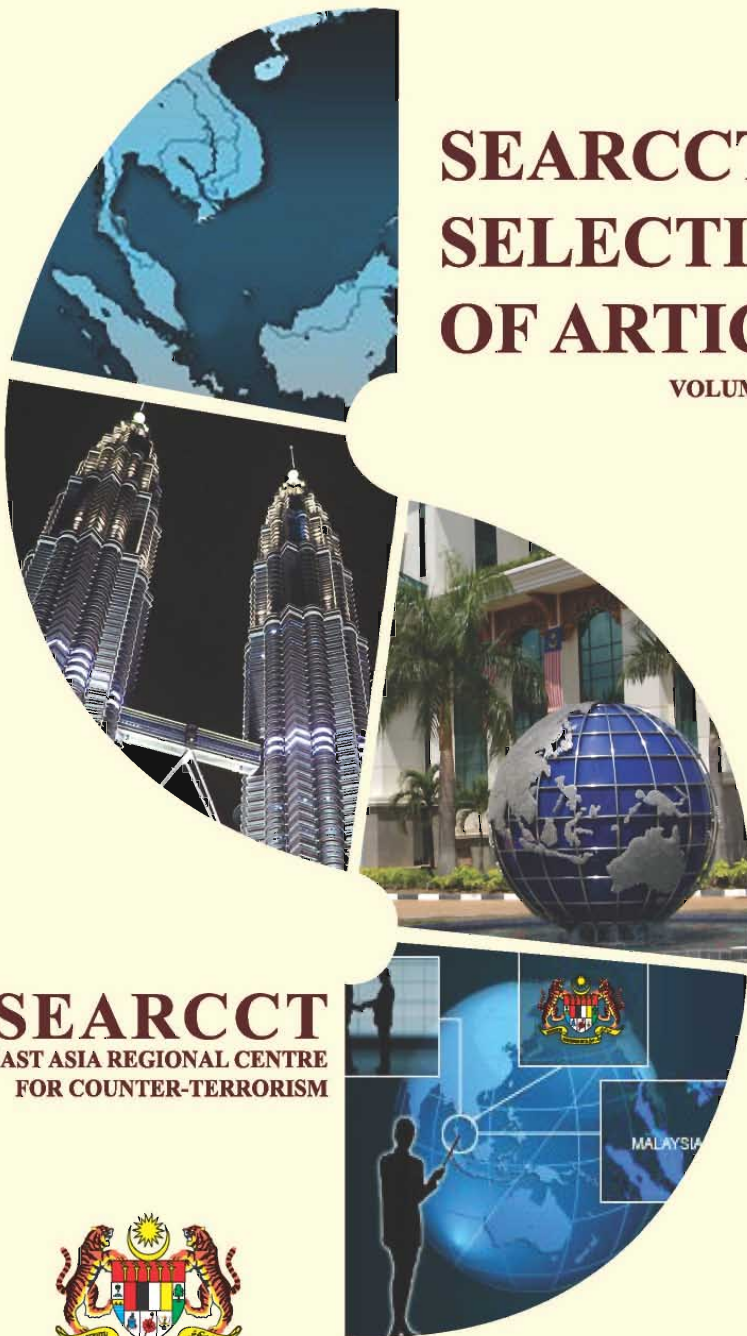


# SEARCCT'S SELECTION OF ARTICLES

VOLUME 2 / 2011



**SEARCCT**  
SOUTHEAST ASIA REGIONAL CENTRE  
FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
MALAYSIA

# SEARCCT'S SELECTION OF ARTICLES

## *PATRON*

DATO' SRI ANIFAH HJ. AMAN

## *HONORARY ADVISOR*

DATUK MOHD RADZI ABDUL RAHMAN

## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

DATIN PADUKA RASHIDAH RAMLI

## *MANAGING EDITOR*

JOHN SAMUEL

## *EDITORIAL COMMITTEE*

THOMAS KORUTH SAMUEL

AHMAD TAJUDDIN MOHD. SAID

MELVIN CHEAH CHEE AUN

SHARMINI ANN NATHAN

KENNIMROD SARIBURAJA

HALIMAH ASHARI

## *PUBLISHER*

Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT)

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

No. 516, Persiaran Mahameru

50480 Kuala Lumpur

MALAYSIA

Tel : (603) 2261 1900

Fax : (603) 2274 9487

Email : [info@searcct.gov.my](mailto:info@searcct.gov.my)

Website : [www.searcct.gov.my](http://www.searcct.gov.my)

---

SEARCCT is dedicated to advocating the understanding of issues pertaining to terrorism and contributing ideas for counter-terrorism policy. The Centre accomplishes this mainly by organising constructive capacity building and public awareness programmes, as well as enhancing information sharing through networking, research and publications. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, transmitted or disseminated in any form or by any means without prior written permission from SEARCCT. ALL STATEMENTS OF FACT AND EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION CONTAINED IN THE PAPERS PUBLISHED IN SEARCCT'S SELECTION OF ARTICLES ARE THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHOR OR AUTHORS. THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY STATEMENTS OF FACT OR OPINION EXPRESSED IN THE PUBLISHED PAPERS.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	i
<i>Datuk Mohd Radzi Abdul Rahman</i> <i>Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia</i>	
EDITOR'S NOTE	iii
<i>Datin Paduka Rashidah Ramli</i> <i>Director-General, Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism</i>	
<b>ARTICLES</b>	
WHY SUCCESSFUL COUNTER-TERRORISM CAN BEGET MORE TERRORISM? INDONESIA SINCE THE 2002 BALI BOMBINGS <i>Bilveer Singh</i>	1
CYBER TERRORISM AND TERRORIST USE OF ICT AND CYBERSPACE <i>Zahri Yunos and Syahrul Hafidz</i>	17
DE-RADICALISATION IN INDONESIA: DISCOURSES AND STRATEGIES <i>Adam D Tyson</i>	27
AUSTRALIA AND COUNTER-TERRORISM IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES <i>Bill Paterson</i>	39
THE PROBLEM WITH CYBER TERRORISM <i>Elina Noor</i>	51
COUNTERING AL-QAEDA AS A "STATE OF MIND" <i>Kumar Ramakrishna</i>	65
CURRENT TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE <i>Carl Ungerer</i>	81

RISING UP TO THE CHALLENGES OF ISLAMIC  
EXTREMISM AND MILITANCY IN MALAYSIA 93  
*Ruhanas Harun*

THE LURE OF YOUTH INTO TERRORISM 107  
*Thomas Koruth Samuel*

### **BOOK REVIEWS**

THE LESSER EVIL: POLITICAL ETHICS IN THE 121  
AGE OF TERROR  
*By Michael Ignatieff*  
*Reviewed by Sharmini Ann Nathan*

WOMEN AS TERRORISTS: MOTHERS, RECRUITERS, AND 125  
MARTYRS  
*By R. Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly*  
*Reviewed by Kennimrod Sariburaja*

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS 128

## **VISION**

**TOWARDS BECOMING A LEADING CENTRE IN TRAINING AND  
RESEARCH ON COUNTER-TERRORISM**

## FOREWORD

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) for the publication of its second issue of *SEARCCT's Selection of Articles*.

The recent and continued spate of terrorist attacks in and around the world reflects the continuing trend for terrorists groups in carrying out their dastardly acts without fear of neither repercussions nor reprisals. These attacks do not discriminate between race, religion, sex or creed and no one is spared in their selfish quest for power, glory and fame.

In situations such as this, it is imperative that we equip our officers with the right tool, information and knowledge to deal with both traditional as well as non-traditional terrorist threats. We need to predict their next step, rather than react in a reactive manner and we need to anticipate that which we do not expect nor imagine. It is a struggle that requires the pooling of resources, expertise, and experience of all peace loving individuals and organisations.

However, the usage of hard power by itself is insufficient to deter such attacks. It requires an intricate balance of both hard and soft approach. To this end, SEARCCT has endeavoured to win the hearts and minds of the society by devoting its time and resource in research and training programs on issues related to counter terrorism. The publication of this booklet is therefore timely, in view of the security situation in the world today. It comprises articles written by experts on the subject and aims to ensure that readers have a deeper understanding of the issues and a better appreciation of the role played by counter-terrorism agencies in promoting public order and international security.

I would therefore, like to express my appreciation to the contributors and editors for their articles and to Datin Paduka Rashidah Ramli, Director-General of SEARCCT, who played a pivotal role in realising the successful publication of this booklet.

On the part of the Foreign Ministry, we are committed to utilise all resources within our purview in combating this scourge. It is a task and responsibility which has to be shouldered by all asunder. I am certain that the articles written in this booklet will not only provide the readers with a better view on the subject matter, but more importantly, will help incite and ignite greater public awareness of this transnational and borderless threat.

**DATUK MOHD RADZI ABDUL RAHMAN**  
**Secretary General**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
**Malaysia**



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the second edition of *SEARCCT's Selection of Articles*. We have tried to ensure that the topics selected and discussed in this issue are not only contemporary in nature, but also address non-traditional terrorist threats.

Unfortunately, the battle to counter terrorism is a herculean task which requires both substantive and in-depth studies into the hows, whys and whats, in order to decipher this intricate labyrinth of psychological and physical mentality of hate and destruction. It has been asserted that “*terrorism has become the systemic weapon of a war that knows no borders or seldom has a face*”. The battle therefore lies not entirely in the traditional sense or realm of combat engagement, but one which surpasses over commonly held beliefs and with a basis of strong psychological psychic.

To this extent, SEARCCT is privileged to have obtained articles written by esteemed scholars in the field of security and terrorism, and it is my earnest hope that the articles in this publication would awaken the senses of its readers making them aware of the role we play in countering the scourge of terrorism and its ever-increasing threat.

I must also congratulate the Research and Publications Division of SEARCCT, for its contribution and for overseeing the successful completion of this project. SEARCCT is also grateful to YB Dato' Sri Anifah Hj. Aman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia and Y.Bhg. Datuk Mohd Radzi Abdul Rahman, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for their guidance and invaluable advice in the publication of this booklet.

Lastly, I am certain that this issue of *SEARCCT's Selection of Articles* would further contribute and enhance the reader's bank of existing knowledge and information in relation to countering terrorism. All the best.

**DATIN PADUKA RASHIDAH RAMLI**  
**Director-General**  
**Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT)**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia**



# WHY SUCCESSFUL COUNTER-TERRORISM CAN BEGET MORE TERRORISM? INDONESIA SINCE THE 2002 BALI BOMBINGS

*Bilveer Singh*

## ABSTRACT

*While Indonesia has long experienced the threat of secular and religious-based terrorism, since the 9/11 incident, it has been viewed as a 'success' story in managing the scourge. This is evident in the killing and capture of most terrorists associated with various bombings in the country since 2002 as well as pre-empting many others. More importantly, most of the terrorists have been tried and imprisoned. Still, by 2010, there was a resurgence of Islamist terrorism in the country and a new phase of warfare being inaugurated, with new leaders, groups, strategies and arms threatening to overturn what was achieved by counter-terrorism strategies in the past. Much of the resurgence and hence, 'failure' of the current counter-terrorism policies is due to the unbalanced concentration on 'hard' approach, with 'soft' strategies being neglected. Also, the tendency of the police to kill many of the terrorists has proved counter-productive, with increased networking among jihadists posing a new threat to the country's security. While 'hard' counter-terrorism measures are necessary, they have proved insufficient as these have to be supplemented with 'soft' disengagement, de-radicalisation and rehabilitation measures, something gravely lacking in Indonesia so far.*

## *Introduction*

Due to the protracted nature of threat posed by both secular and religious-based terrorism in Southeast Asia, long predating the 9/11 incident by many decades, counter-terrorism policies have existed in the region, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. During the Cold War, countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Singapore experienced a spate of terrorism perpetrated by various communist parties and their armed wings, aimed at destabilising and overthrowing governments in the region. While the communists were largely obliterated after the attempted coup in September 1965, various extremist groups continued to operate in Indonesia, with terrorism often as a weapon of choice, especially by the *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM) in Aceh and Islamist militants, best

exhibited in the hijacking of a Garuda plane in 1980 and bombing of the historical Borobudur temple in 1984. Additionally, some countries were also victims of international terrorism. For instance, in 1974, members of the PLO and Japanese Red Army jointly attacked an oil refinery and took hostages in Singapore, referred to as the 'Laju Incident', as did four Pakistani nationals who hijacked a Singapore Airline plane in 1991 with the expressed purpose of freeing political prisoners in Pakistan. Religious-based terrorism has long existed in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines with members of the *Darul Islam*, GAM, Pattani United Liberation Organisation and Moro National Liberation Front seeking autonomy and/or independence in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines respectively (Singh, 2009, pp. 27-43).

Against this backdrop, since the 9/11 incident, the threat posed by terrorism or 'new terrorism' has reached a new crescendo due to the nexus between national, regional and international terrorism. Even though no religion has a monopoly of religious-based terrorism (evident from Sikh-based *Khalistani* terrorist movements, Hindu-linked Tamil Tigers, Buddhist-based *Aum Shinrikyo*, Christian-based Irish Republican Army groups), what has come to dominate the Southeast Asian terrorism landscape has been Islamist terrorism, which will be the focus of this short brief (Juergensmeyer, 2010, pp.262-273). More importantly, as Indonesia is associated with the creation of the key regional terrorist group, *Al-Jemaah Al-Islamiyyah* (AJAI), it has also been the main target of its terrorism; hence, this study will focus on terrorism and counter-terrorism policies in Indonesia (Singh, 2007, pp. 50-99). Essentially, this study seeks to answer why successful counter-terrorism measures in Indonesia have not led to the end of the threat posed by Islamist *ihadists*.

### *Radical Islam in Indonesia*

Since Islam emerged as the dominant religion in Indonesia by the fifteenth century, it has played a crucial role in national politics. Historically, Islamic kingdoms such as Mataram, structured the political, social and economic order along Islamic principles and teachings. Islam also formed the basis of the nationalist struggle against the Dutch. Since 1945, the role of Islam has been strongly debated between those wanting to define Indonesia as an Islamic state, best championed by the proponents of the Jakarta Charter and those wanting a secular-oriented Republic as championed by supporters of the *Pancasila* state ideology (Turmundi and Riza, 2005; Zaki, 2008). Those championing the creation of an Islamic state fall into two main groups. First, those who have pursued peaceful and

constitutional means, best evident in the Constitutional Assembly from 1955 to 1959, and by the *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* and *Partai Bulan Bintang* today. Second, those who have opted for an armed struggle, championed among others by *Darul Islam* under the leadership of Kartosuwiryo and more recently, AJAI.

With Islam dominantly entrenched in Indonesia by the fifteenth century, there have been attempts to ‘purify’ Islam by orienting it towards the radical course. Four phases are discernible, defined mainly by attempts to locate Islam at the epicentre of political discourse in the country (Wahid, 2009). As more Indonesians, through the *Haj* (pilgrimage) and study came into contact with Islamic centres in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, there were attempts since the nineteenth century, to terminate mixed (allegedly impure) practices in Islam and to follow ‘true’ Islam as much as possible.

One of the earliest attempts to purify the religion took place in the Minangkabau region of Sumatra, culminating in the ‘*Padri War*’. This marked the onset of what was to dominate the discourse of Indonesian Islam, with the ‘modernists’, wanting to reform the religion in line with the Middle East; and the ‘traditionalists’ supporting the *status quo*, preferring to practice Islam in line with the culture and traditions found in Indonesia, especially in Java. The modernists eventually established the *Muhammadiyah* organisation and the traditionalists, the *Nahdatul Ulama* (NU), in early twentieth century, representing two key streams of Islam that have dominated and co-existed in Indonesia ever since. In this phase, *Muhammadiyah*, PERSIS and *Al-Irsyad* were the key purveyors of puritanical Islam in Indonesia.

The second phase covered the period 1945 to 1965. Mainly under Sukarno’s nationalist leadership, despite challenge from Islamists, radical Islam was never given the chance to rise. This began with the rejection of the Jakarta Charter being included in the Indonesian Constitution and the eventual banning of the *Masjumi* Party in 1962. The third phase covered the period 1965 to 1998, embracing the New Order era under Suharto. Despite the Indonesian military’s initial collusion with various Muslim organisations such as the NU to crush the communists and marginalise Sukarno, eventually, by the early 1970s, Suharto adopted a hard line approach and succeeded in marginalising them.

Since 1998, Indonesia has been in the fourth and current phase of the resurgence of radical Islam, where, through democracy, openness and the right to organise and express them, Islamist political organisations have mushroomed, attempting to transform Indonesia into an Islamic state. While Suharto played a critical role in sanctioning the rise of Indonesia as an *Islamic society*, the New Order was stringently opposed to Indonesia

becoming a *formal Islamic state*. Since 1998, there have been concerted efforts, formal and informal, peaceful and violent, to formally transform Indonesia into an Islamic state.

In Indonesia, the rise of radical Islam can be understood through a number of discourses (Mulkhan, 2009). First, is the literalist approach towards religion with religious teachings' interpretation based on the written word. Arabs refer to this as '*harfiah*' in command, meaning the supreme importance of the written word or *huruf*. Second, is the romantic importance of religion, with the unseen past viewed as good tradition and the ideal type that should be aspired. This is the basis of *Salafism*, the root source of modern day Islamist radicalism. Third is the view that there should be no new interpretation or *ijtihad* of what has been stated in the *Holy Quran* or *Kitab Suci* (sacred text). The opposition to new '*tafsir*', exegesis or reinterpretation, is based on the notion that the *Quranic* text is all-supreme and sacred, relevant for all times, and the context in which it is being practiced is irrelevant. In short, the text is more important than the context or realm of practice. Linked to this is the sacredness of things Arabic, especially language, dress code, greetings, personnel and even experience. For instance, the Arabic language is viewed as '*Bahasa Surga*', 'Heaven's Language' or *Luwa Khat al Jannah*, largely explaining the leadership of people of Arab descent in almost all organisations involved in radical Islam in Indonesia.

Fourth, is the belief in '*kebenaran tunggal*' or absolute truth, with any other view or interpretation treated as unIslamic and heretical. A believer of such 'wrong' views can be classified as an apostate or *murtad*, and regarded as a traitor to the religion. Fifth, is the practice of exclusivity and where working with adherents of other religions (*Kafirs* or non-believers) is considered '*haram*' or forbidden. In fact, many Islamist hardliners will not even cooperate with Muslims who do not share their views, and where such Muslims are described as *jahiliyyahs* or ignorant, and lately, as *thaghuts*, evil people in power ("*Ketika Teroris Balas Menyerang*", *Gatra*, p.87). This directly leads to intolerance of others. Sixth, the necessity to use violence (*Jihad*) to realise their beliefs. Radical Islamists believe that violence carried out for religious causes is just and legitimate, with martyrdom or *syahid*, the ultimate gain for those dying for such religious causes, including suicide bombings, with *Syhadat* (Paradise) their final resting abode. Seventh, the adoption of Islamist religious ideology in political discourse, with what should be adopted by the state, based on religious prescriptions. Eighth, the virulent opposition to modernisation and democracy, as these are viewed as un- and anti-Islamic. Ninth, and finally, the stringent stance that liberalism, pluralism and secularism should be totally opposed as these undermine the

attainment of Islamic principles, especially of an Islamic state.

What the above makes clear is that the ideologies of *salafism* represented by *Wahhabism*, *Ikhwan Muslimin* or the fusion of *Wahhabism* and *Ikhwan Muslimin*, are being aggressively propagated and infiltrated in Indonesia. What this is leading to is the Middle Easternisation of Indonesian Islam or what the locals refer to as *Arabisasi Islam* in opposition to *Islam Pribumi*. This has created an intense debate and conflict between those championing ‘*Arabisasi Islam*’ and ‘*Pribumisasi Islam*’. The essence of the conflict is the drive by modernists and conservatives to purify Islam of unIslamic thoughts and practices. There is also the promotion of monotheistic approach to Islam compared to the time-honoured pluralistic practice in Indonesia. The conflict between the two can also be viewed as an ideological difference between those who believe that Indonesian Islam should be approached as stated in the holy text and those who argue that the holy text is important but actual practices must be interpreted to suit present day era and context.

### *Indonesia’s Terrorist Pains*

While religious-oriented violence has a long history in Indonesia (*Padri War*, Revolt by Prince Diponegoro, Kartosuwiryo’s violent attempt to create an Islamic State and the violence by *Komando Jihad*), the upsurge of *jihadi* violence since 2000 reveals that Indonesia has been unable to immunise itself from the rise of similar movements elsewhere, especially the Middle East. What makes AJAI and its affiliates so dangerous is its propensity to successfully undertake violence, almost to strike at will, including the use of suicide bombers, something which never happened in the past in Indonesia until the 2002 Bali bombings. This shows the influence of Middle East radical Islam, including the quest of *syahadat* through martyrdom. Some of the key violence perpetrated by AJAI and its associated groups (Singh, 2007, pp.100-118) include:

- 1) 1 August 2000: Attempted assassination of Philippines’ Ambassador to Indonesia. A bomb was detonated at his residence killing two people and injuring 21 others, including the Ambassador.
- 2) 13 September 2000: A car bomb exploded at the Jakarta Stock Exchange killing 15 people.
- 3) 24 December 2000: Coordinated bombings of churches all over Indonesia.
- 4) 23 September 2002: A grenade exploded in a car near the



residence of an American embassy official in Jakarta killing one of the attackers.

- 5) 12 October 2002: The first Bali bombings killed 202 people and injured 300 others.
- 6) 2003: A suicide bombing took place in Jakarta at the J.W. Marriott Hotel killing 12 and injuring 150 others.
- 7) 9 September 2004: Bombing outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta killing 11 and injuring 160.
- 8) 1 October 2005: The second Bali bombings killing 20 and injuring 130 civilians with three suicide bombers killed.
- 9) 17 July 2009: Bombing of Ritz Carlton and J.W. Marriott hotels in Jakarta killing nine civilians, injuring 16 with two suicide bombers killed.

### *Factors Explaining the Rise of Islamist-based Terrorism and Radicalism in Indonesia*

Many factors have combined to play a role in the rise of radical Islam in Indonesia (Singh, 2007, pp. 16-25, 51-61). These can be categorised as external and internal factors. There are two main external imperatives. First, the innate Muslim anger against domination of the world by the West in almost all aspects of politics, economics, social and culture. This is even the case when the West is almost totally dependent on others for resources and markets. Second, in addition to the West's hegemony of the world, there is also the anger that the Muslim World is being dominated and occupied by the West, either directly or indirectly, to promote West's interests and security, by disadvantaging most Muslims. This is best evident in the West's aggression against Muslims, recently evident in Afghanistan and Iraq, the West's enmity towards Iran and equally important, the West's silence of Israel's repression of the Palestinians.

There are equally important internal imperatives. First, most governments in Muslim-dominant societies are viewed as un- and anti-Islamic, best evident in their unwillingness to accommodate and compromise with Islam and Islamic-oriented interests. Sukarno's rejection of the Jakarta Charter, after initially agreeing to it, is seen as evidence of this attitude. Worst, many of these regimes tend to persecute Islamists, as was undertaken by President Suharto. The Tanjung Priok massacre in Indonesia, where more than 250 Muslims were shot dead by the military, merely strengthens this perception. Second, most governments are viewed as proxies or agents of the West, promoting their political, economic and

security interests, including liberal democracy, even though it is socio-culturally antithetical to Muslims societies. Instead, Islamists clamour for *Sharia*-based societies, not modeled on the West.

Third, there is also anger and revulsion against the general late response to problems of injustice and repression by national governments, especially when interests of Muslims are involved. For instance, in Indonesia, the Indonesian Government repression of the Acehnese for more than fifty years and the late response to alleviate the sufferings of the Muslims in Ambon are pointed as evidence of this. Fourth, there is also the general belief that the Islamic community is facing a serious crisis of leadership and that secular-oriented leaders that tend to dominate governments usually harm Muslim interests.

Fifth, the existence of democracy, and the openness and freedom provided by the new political system have allowed Islamists to openly champion their cause through mainstream media and politics. Sixth, the apparent failure of secular-oriented governments in power since 1945, especially since 1998 and poor all-round governance have provided Islamists with a basis to challenge the existing political system, arguing that Indonesia's ills can be easily cured through a political system based on Islam. Finally, many Muslims in Indonesia also believe that since they constitute the majority of the population, not only are they entitled to power, but the power structure and policies should reflect the needs, character and orientations of the majority population, all the more, since the *Pancasila* state has failed to serve the majority of the populace.

In view of these facilitating factors, the motivations for radical Islamic causes are many. First, there is the attraction of money and wealth, with many individuals and organisations, being funded by internal and external organisations to champion radical Islamic causes. Second, is the quest for power, believing that once state power has been grabbed, only then can a true Islamic society and state based on *Sharia* be created. Third, there is the continuous need for self-actualisation by individuals and they find solace and relevance in championing Islamic causes. Fourth, the belief that they are involved in the holy struggle to bring mankind, the *Ummah* (Islamic Community) on the path of righteousness and prevent them from straying away from the rightful path (*perjuangan amar ma'ruf nehi mungkar*). Fifth, the need to counter and react to what the 'enemies' of Islam, in and outside Indonesia, are perpetrating against Muslims. Finally, there are many who join such organisations because they are uninformed and can easily be misled by those leaders who propound radicalism as the only true path to salvation. In Indonesia, there is the notion of '*ikut-ikutan*', of following what is said by the religious leader. This stems from the Arabic concept of '*sanikk na wah atana*' or of being guided and

following what is instructed by the leader (Sunarkno, 2006, pp. 43-59).

*Why Indonesia's Successful Counter-Terrorism Measures have Failed to 'Clear the Swamp' of Terrorists and Radicals?*

To Indonesia's credit, it has succeeded in arresting and sentencing nearly 600 AJAI members, including top leaders such as Hambali (arrested in Thailand with American help), Mas Selamat (arrested first in Indonesia and later in Malaysia), Abu Dujana, Zarkasih, Omar al-Faruq (allegedly an *al-Qaeda* operative working with AJAI) and Abubakar Ba'asyir (who was later released and rearrested again in August 2010) as well as killed some of its key leaders such as Azahari, Noordin Top and Dulmatin. It has also executed three of the key leaders involved in the 2002 Bali bombings, namely, Imam Samudra, Amrozi and Mukhlas. Indonesia's 'success story' is evident from the following figures: terrorists captured (563); terrorists tried and sentenced (471); terrorists killed (44); terrorists dying as suicide bombers (10); jailed terrorists released (245); terrorists still serving their sentences (126); terrorists being tried (61); and terrorists under investigations (31) (*Kompas*, 25 September 2010). Since then, seven terrorists have been killed with another 11 captured, mostly associated with bank robberies in Medan and Padang, Sumatra.

Still, despite stiff laws and massive investments in counter-terrorism, *jihadists* continue to be recruited and the flow appears unstoppable. This is evident in the non-stop arrests and killings of *jihadists* in the last few months of 2010 even though the arrest of 10 *jihadists* in Palembang, Sumatra in July 2008 was a forewarning of the continued presence of these 'holy warriors' in Indonesia. For instance, in February, the Indonesian security forces discovered a splintered AJAI network operating in Aceh, Sumatra, calling itself *Al Qaeda Aceh*, under the leadership of Dulmatin, involving 170 militants, of which more than 110 were captured and 13 killed. In February, police captured 27 and killed three terrorists. In March, Dulmatin and four others were shot dead and another eight captured in Jakarta. In April, security forces captured six men with close ties to AJAI, including Abu Musa, who was believed to be close to Noordin Top. In May, fifteen men were arrested in Jakarta, believed to be part of the militants who escaped from Aceh, and allegedly linked to AJAI spiritual leader, Abubakar Bashyir. Later in the month, another three AJAI terrorists were arrested in Solo, Central Java. In June, Abdullah Sunata, one of the most important leaders of the rejuvenated *jihadi* movement, who linked his militant KOMPAK group with AJAI, was arrested with two others with one killed. At the same time, dangerous

first-generation AJAI terrorists such as Umar Patek, Abu Tholut, Upik Lawangga and Zulkarnean remain at large with many more new leaders emerging but are outside the security agencies' radar screen. Beginning in August, highly-trained and armed men also began robbing banks in Medan and Padang as well as killing four policemen. The Indonesian Police Chief, General Bambang Hendarso Danuri has since announced the arrest of 31 and killing of 10 terrorists involved in the bank heists (*Kompas*, 26 September 2010).

What the arrests and killings make clear is that despite the upswing in counter-terrorism policies by the Indonesian Government since the first Bali bombings in October 2002, the commitment to *jihadi* causes remain unswerving. While arrests and killings of its leaders may have dismantled the original AJAI group, like a hydra-headed monster, new *jihadi* groups, directly and indirectly linked to AJAI, have sprouted, posing greater danger to Indonesia and its *Pancasila* pluralist ideology, as the aim of establishing an Islamic State based on *Sharia* continues to be aspired. While there are peace-oriented *jihadists* who want to create an Islamic State through *dakwah* or preaching, at the same time, groups committed to achieving the goal through violence continue to exist. If anything, there is a split not just between the pro-bomb and pro-preaching group, but also between the pro-bomb groups. In the latter, there was the group (*Tanzim Qaedat al-Jihad*) led by Noordin Top which believed in suicide bombing, regardless of the cost (including to Muslims) and the one led by Dulmatin, which believed in targeted assassination, in order to reduce Muslim casualties. Still, their commitment to violence cannot be underestimated. Also, purely AJAI groups are now more difficult to find as all types of mutations are taking place, with group identity becoming less important and the mission to establish an Islamic State becoming more urgent, especially in the light of the successes of the security forces. This was clearly evident in the recent capture of militants in Aceh, Jakarta and Solo, where members from various groups seem to be coalescing, (practicing some kind of radicals/terrorist inter-operability) among others, disgruntled members of AJAI, those from Abdullah Sunata-led KOMPAK and Abubakar Ba'asyir-led *Jamaah Anshorut Tauhid*. Sunata, captured in Central Java, was planning to bomb the Danish embassy in revenge for a Danish newspaper publishing cartoons on Prophet Mohammad in 2005.

While there are no simple explanations for the continued attraction of *jihadism* in Indonesia, one can conclude that there are a multitude of factors accounting for *jihadi* violence and continued attraction of *jihadism* in Indonesia. Most non-West etiologies about *jihadi* violence in general, especially in Indonesia, has blamed this on political factors such as the unending Arab-Israeli conflict and the West's continued hegemony in the

world, to social-cultural factors such as revolt *against* Western cultures, norms and mores, economic factors such as poverty as well as social *issues* such as injustice and alienation. Whatever the actual explanation, central to this is the critical role of radical Islamist ideology, calling upon an individual to do his duty as a ‘good Muslim’ and where the death and destruction is legitimised as a religious duty to help the *Ummah* and attain ultimate *syahadat* through martyrdom. Sayyid Qutb re-interpreted Islamic thoughts and traditions (*ijtehad*) arguing that the existing decadent order (*al-nizam al-jahili*) must be replaced by an Islamic one (*al-nizam al-Islami*) through *jihad* and only then can Muslims be able to live in peace and prosperity. Using a binary approach, Islamists view the world being divided between ‘Land of Islam’ (*Dar al-Islam*) and ‘Land of War’ (*Dar al-Harb*) or ‘Land of Unbelievers’ (*Dar al-Kufr*), and here the first must eventually triumph. Still, despite successful counter-terrorism measures, a combination of external and internal factors account for the continued ability of radical leaders to recruit followers for the cause of *jihad* (holy war).

While revenge is an important motivation, captured terrorists and extremists have also articulated the need to establish an Islamic State through violence as peaceful means have been exhausted and failed. Additionally, there is also the argument of *perjuangan amar ma’ruf nehi mungkar* which states that good Indonesian Muslims should invite and persuade other Indonesian Muslims towards the rightful path and not stray away from the holy scriptures and this can be undertaken by deeds as well as policies implemented by an Islamic State. Most *jihadists* have also invoked their involvement in violence as part of a religious duty against the enemies of Muslims in Indonesia and where this struggle is legitimised on grounds of *jihad fisabillah* or struggle in the name of *Allah*, especially against local authorities who are viewed as being anti-Islam and agents of the ‘Christian-Jewish Crusaders’. Violence against *kafirs* (non-believers, especially enemies) and *jahiliyyahs* (Muslims who have strayed) is justified and those undertaking it are viewed as holy warriors and martyrs if they die in undertaking such as a sacred religious duty. Radicals such as Tamiyyah, Qutb and Osama have consistently argued that the malaise of Muslim societies in the Middle East and elsewhere is principally due to straying away from ‘the path’ (*as-sirat al-mustaqim*) and problems would only be remedied if Muslims return to the original path as stated in *Quran* and *Sunnah*, except that the path is interpreted along the lines of radical ideology, including the use of violence. This is because in Islamist *weltanschauung* (worldview), politics and religion are fused and inseparable (*din wa-dawla*), and all problems would be solved if the ‘Islamic Way’ is adopted – in short, Islam is the only solution!

While the quest for *jihadism* was somewhat contained from 1945 to 1998, (due mainly to the tough, often repressive policies of the state), since May 1998, Indonesia's democratisation has provided additional political space and opportunities for radicals to propagate their ideas openly in an attempt to capture the hearts and minds of the 90 per cent Muslim population. This has not been helped by the failure of governance, especially where widespread poverty, great income gaps, corruption, social injustice and blatant materialism tend to persuade many to reject the Western-based political, economic and social-cultural norms in favour of Islamic ones propagated by Islamic radicals. Interestingly, many youths and members of the middle class are beginning to embrace the Islamist ideology and if unchecked, it can lead to a ground-up paradigm shift, mainly in reaction to the failure of secular-based policies and misgovernance. The repression by the security apparatus against Muslims in the past and continued perception that the government tends to favour non-Muslims have also accounted for the rise of radicalism, with many prepared to support *jihadism* as a gateway for the creation of an Islamic State that would, in their perception, be just for the Muslim majority.

In addition to the failure of governance, there is also the important role of transnational Islamic radical forces, which have succeeded in purveying their ideology into Indonesia as well as the massive funding that have been provided to institutions (mosques, *madrassahs*, foundations, religious organisations, etc.) that promote radicalism, especially of the *Wahhabi* and *Ikhwan Muslimin* mode. Here, the internet is widely utilised with *jihadi*-oriented websites successfully radicalising individuals in both Muslim majority and minority countries. The role of Saudi 'Petro' dollars, in particular, is a crucial determinant, channeled through charitable organizations, driven, in part, by Riyadh's competition with Teheran for influence in the Islamic world. Also, foreign, mainly Gulf states' funding for a flourishing *jihadi*-oriented publishing industry has played a vital role in propagating radical ideas to the masses with works of al-Banna, Qutb, Maududi, Osama and Zawahiri easily and cheaply available to anyone interested in reading them. In the end, radical ideology, including the legitimisation of violence, is ceaselessly propagated in educational institutions (state-controlled and privately-run *madrassahs*), mosques, social-cultural institutions, religious and charitable foundations, mass media, mass circulating publications and speeches of radical leaders, signaling that Indonesia is losing the 'war of ideas' to the radicals.

*The Urgent Need to Supplement 'Soft' Measures to Indonesia's Traditional 'Hard' Counter-Terrorism Strategies*

In essence, three factors, the continued existence of various problems and grievances, the strong attraction to radical ideology and the willingness to undertake sacrifices as a religious duty, largely explain why Indonesia continues to be threatened by *jihadi*-oriented terrorism. Like most societies afflicted with the threat of terrorism, Indonesia has adopted a wide range of measures to tackle the menace. This include killing terrorist combatants, imprisonment of captured terrorists, provision of financial and other inducements to terrorists to give up the struggle, amnesties, establishment of political dialogues as well as political concessions to meet half-way the demands to solve grievances that have made individuals adopt terrorism against the authorities. While these are important measures, by themselves, they are necessary but not sufficient to end terrorism.

However, Indonesia's experience with counter-terrorism has led to a new thinking that 'soft' measures are necessary as part of a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy. First, there is the realisation that Islamist terrorism and radicalism is a long-term struggle and is not about to end in the short term. Second, related to the first, following the 9/11 incident, the euphoria that all it required was for individual states and world community to launch a 'war on terrorism' and the problem would be terminated due to the finite number of terrorists, have been proven wrong. Instead, the 'war', if it is one, needs to be comprehensively calibrated as new recruits, for a host of reasons, are swelling the ranks of terrorists, and additional measures are needed to stamp the tide.

Third, while traditional counter-terrorism measures have been somewhat successful, there is a quantum leap of people who are imprisoned and they cannot be imprisoned forever, all the more as radicalisation in prisons is becoming a dangerous breeding ground for dedicated and highly networked terrorists. Finally, states would need to solve various grievances and this include abandoning time-honoured policies of 'no negotiations with terrorists' as this can be self-defeating because eventually most governments would be forced to deal with the terrorists, especially if there are genuine grievances and abuses caused by the State. All these factors have led to the importance of 'soft' counter-terrorism measures, supplementing, not supplanting, the traditional ones.

Here, taking a leaf from how states dealt with terrorist groups in the pre-9/11 era, especially in Europe and South America, there is sufficient evidence of individuals and groups exiting from terrorism, renouncing violence for peaceful dialogues and integration into society, as



was evident in Italy, Germany and the peace agreement that ended IRA's violent campaign. Studies have shown terrorists may be prepared to reverse their involvement due to, among others: disillusionment with group's goals, violence and leader's behaviour; loss of position within the group; inability to take pressure of being hunted as a fugitive as well as tensions between loyalty to the group and family obligations. At the same time, the opportunity to exit from covert life; attraction of amnesty or reduced sentence for crimes; availability of education, job training and economic support; development of new social networks; longing for an ordinary and peaceful life; and starting a family, can lead an individual to abandon terrorism (Horgan, 2009, pp.17-29; Bjorgo, 2009, pp.30-48).

It is in this context that if Indonesia is to enter into an endgame in its war with terrorism, then it would need to seriously adopt a comprehensive disengagement, de-radicalisation and rehabilitation (DDR) programme (Singh, 28 May 2010). This would include:

1. Using go-betweens to influence terrorists to abandon their cause, especially in prison and other counseling formats. This can involve family members, religious leaders, scholars, journalists, peers or even repentant terrorists.
2. Religious re-education where the terrorist is made conscious of what is in the *Quran* and *Hadith*, and how false theo-political interpretations had misguided him. Here, the important role of *Imams, Muftis* and religious scholars in the 'war of ideas', including acquainting terrorists with *fatwas* banning terrorism to alter their ideological outlook, must be stressed.
3. Mobilising repentant terrorists, especially those in leadership positions in the past, can be a critical 'magic bullet' in leading many terrorists, especially those in the lower to middle level ranks, to abandon terrorism.
4. Mobilising the family and peers to provide support, and a sense of belonging, has proved to be critically important, and something that has been used extensively to wean away an individual from terrorism as well as encouraging the individual to set up a family.

While Indonesia has adopted, mostly on an *ad hoc* basis, some of these measures, they are few and far between to make an impact in 'draining the swamp'. Some of Indonesia's 'soft' measures include repentant terrorists such as Nasir Abbas and Ali Imron, being mobilised to win over dedicated members of AJAI. The national parliament has also endorsed a poverty-reduction programme as part of a pre-emptive strategy to deny recruits to terrorism. What is important is that the value of DDR



will help to increase the government's credibility and legitimacy, promote humane ways to manage terrorism, reduce the number of terrorist and extremists in the field and prisons, reduce violence, de-radicalise society, integrate repentant terrorists into society, learn more about why individuals adopt terrorism, as well as use terrorists who have abandoned violence to acquire intelligence and act as go-betweens to win over other terrorists in the hope of terminating the menace.

### *Conclusion*

As the largest Muslim nation and one with a long history of *jihadism*, one should not expect Islamic radicalism and violence to disappear in the near future. If anything, Indonesia has emerged as a cornerstone for struggle, where the successful victory by radicals would have a serious domino-effect on the rest of Southeast, South and Central Asia. Also, with the limited success of the government's disengagement, de-radicalisation and rehabilitation of extremists and terrorists, the challenge posed by *jihadism* is a long-term one, something Indonesia's neighbours, near and far, should brace for. What to do with the resurgence of radical Islamist ideology, especially in the face of the government's failure to contain it, will emerge as a major non-traditional and asymmetrical security challenge in the coming years, something policy makers and the community at large must find ways to cope as it cannot be simply wished away.

Here, the promotion of DDR is only meant as an additional 'weapon' in the armoury of States to fight terrorism. Unlike 'hard' measures, 'soft' ones can succeed in softening the hearts and minds of even the hard-core terrorists, especially when they are disillusioned, longing for a normal life and wanting to exit from terrorism. If adopted, DDR should be comprehensive, involving prevention programmes to preempt people from adopting terrorism, disengagement programmes to encourage individual to renounce extremism and violence, rehabilitation programmes to integrate former terrorists into society and finally, after-care programmes to prevent recidivism. There is no one-size-fit-all strategy and no guarantees that DDR would terminate terrorism due to the danger of recidivism. Still, if terrorism is to be tackled from the long-term perspective, a new *modus vivendi* is needed, including addressing the root causes of why an individual takes up arm against the authorities. While terrorism and counter-terrorism require in-depth understanding of a complex phenomenon, DDR represents an additional tool that should be embraced and has proved successful in helping terrorists exit from

terrorism in a number of countries, and only then can Indonesia enter into a discourse of an ‘endgame’ as far as *jihadi* terrorism is concerned. In the meantime, with so many armed *jihadists* on the loose and the terrorists launching some variant of an ‘urban war’ against the police, hard, traditional policies are likely to dominate Indonesia’s approach to counter-terrorism.

### References

- “Aksi Jaringan Sang Gubernur Militer”. (2010, 3 October). *Tempo*.
- “Akhir Kisah Perampok Bersenjata”. (2010, 29 September). *Gatra*.
- Bjorgo, T. (2009). Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right. In Bjorgo, T. and Horgan, J. (eds.), *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*. London: Routledge.
- Horgan, J. (2009). Individual Disengagement: A Psychological Analysis. In Bjorgo, T. and Horgan, J. (eds.), *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement*. London: Routledge.
- Juergensmeyer, M. (2010). The Global Rise of Religious Nationalism. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 3, (June), pp.262-273.
- “Keterlibatan Teroris Dicurangi”. (2010, 26 September). *Kompas*.
- “Ketika Teroris Balas Menyerang”. (2010, 6 October). *Gatra*.
- Mubarak M. Zaki. (2008). *Genealogi Islam Radikal Di Indonesia: Gerakan, Pemikiran dan Prospek Demokrasi*. Jakarta: Pustaka LPEES Indonesia.
- Mulkhan, Abdul Munir. (2009). *Politik Santri: Cara Merebut Hati Rakyat*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Singh, B. (2007). *The Talibanization of Southeast Asia: Losing the War on Terror to Islamist Extremists*. Westport, Connecticut, USA: Praeger Security International.

- Singh, B. (2010). "Terrorism Abandonment (DDR) as a Key to Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Future", *IDSA Comment*, 28 May. New Delhi: Institute of Defence and Strategic Analysis.
- Sunarko, A. D. H. (2006). *Ideologi Teroris Indonesia*. Jakarta: Grafika Inda.
- "Targetnya Ambil Alih Kekusaan". (2010, 25 September). *Kompas*.
- Turmundi, Endang and Sihbidi, Riza (eds.). (2005). *Islam dan Radikalisme di Indonesia*, Jakarta: LIPI Press.
- Wahid, Abdurrahman. (2009). *Ilusi Negara Islam: Expansi Gerakan Islam Transnational di Indonesia*. Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, Gerakan Bhinneka Tunggal Eka and Maarif Institute.

# CYBER TERRORISM AND TERRORIST USE OF ICT AND CYBERSPACE

*Zahri Yunos and Syahrul Hafidz*

## ABSTRACT

*Cyberspace is a virtual space that has become as important as real space for businesses, economics, politics and communities. Malaysia's commitment in using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as reflected by the investment in the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and its Flagship increases our dependency on cyberspace. However, this dependency places Malaysia in an extremely precarious position because cyberspace is vulnerable to borderless cyber attacks. This paper provides an overview on the concept and fundamental elements of cyber terrorism, as well as the challenges encountered in dealing with cyber terrorism activities. This paper further highlights the initiatives taken by CyberSecurity Malaysia in educating, safeguarding and strengthening cyber security initiatives, including threats from cyber terrorism and the terrorist use of ICT and cyberspace in the country.*

*Keywords: Cyber Terrorism, Cyber Threats, Critical National Information Infrastructure (CNII)*

Cyberspace is a virtual place that has become as important as physical space for social, economic and political activities. Many countries in the world are increasing their dependency on cyberspace when they use Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This dependency places these countries in a precarious position because cyberspace is borderless and vulnerable to cyber attacks. Individuals have the ability and capability to cause damage to a nation through cyberspace. Cyber attacks are also attractive because it is a cheap in relation to the costs of developing, maintaining and using advanced as well as sophisticated tools. Many have declared that cyberspace is the fifth domain along with land, air, sea and space, and it is crucial to battlefield success.

## *Concepts and Terms*

It is noted that several definitions of terrorism also include targets

directed at computer systems and its services that control a nation's energy facilities, water distribution, communication systems, and other critical infrastructure. Australia's Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2002 defines terrorism, among others, as actions that seriously interfere, disrupt, or destroy, an electronic system including, but not limited to, an information system; a telecommunications system; a financial system; a system used for the delivery of essential government services; a system used for, or by, an essential public utility; or a system used for, or by, a transport system" [1]. Similarly, Malaysia's Penal Code also comprises provision dealing with terrorism. Chapter VIA, Section 130B describes terrorism as an act or threat of action designed or intended to disrupt or seriously interfere with, any computer systems or the provision of any services directly related to communications infrastructure, banking or financial services, utilities, transportation or other essential infrastructure [2].

The term cyber terrorism was first coined in 1997 by Barry Collin, a senior research fellow at the Institute for Security and Intelligence in California. He defined cyber terrorism as the convergence of "cybernetics" and "terrorism" [3]. The most widely cited definition of cyber terrorism is by Professor Dorothy E. Denning, Director of the Georgetown Institute for Information Assurance, at the Georgetown University in the United States where she viewed cyber terrorism as the convergence of terrorism and cyberspace [4]. It is generally understood to mean unlawful attacks and threats of attack against computers, networks and the information stored therein when done to intimidate or coerce a government or its people in furtherance of political or social objectives.

Likewise, James A. Lewis, of the US Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), defined cyber terrorism as "the use of computer network tools to shut down critical national infrastructures (such as energy, transportation, government operations) or to coerce or intimidate a government or civilian population" [5]. The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defined terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." [6]. The US Department of State defined terrorism as premeditated politically-motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents.

Traditional terrorism and cyber terrorism share the same basic attributes. One approach in understanding cyber terrorism is by breaking it down to its fundamental elements. There are at least five elements which must be satisfied to construe cyber terrorism:

- i. Politically-motivated cyber attacks that lead to death or bodily injury [3, 4, 5, 6];
- ii. Cyber attacks that cause fear and/or physical harm through cyber attack techniques [4, 5, 6];
- iii. Serious attacks against critical information infrastructures such as financial, energy, transportation and government operations [4, 5, 7, 8];
- iv. Attacks that disrupt non-essential services are not considered cyber terrorism [4, 5, 7, 8]; and
- v. Attacks that are not primarily focused on monetary gain [4].

### *Malaysia's National Cyber Security Policy*

In 2005, Malaysia's Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) carried out a study on the National Cyber Security Policy (NCSP) which was endorsed by the Malaysian Government in May 2006. The NCSP was formulated to address threats and risks to the Critical National Information Infrastructure (CNII) and developed action plans to mitigate such risks. The policy consist of eight (8) policy thrusts; Effective Governance, Legislative and Regulatory Framework, Cyber Security Technology Framework, Culture of Security and Capacity Building, Research and Development Towards Self Reliance, Compliance and Enforcement, Cyber Security Emergency Readiness and International Cooperation.

CNII consists of assets (real and virtual), systems and functions that are vital to nations that their exploitation, damage or destruction would have a devastating impact on national economic strength, image, defense and security, government capabilities to function efficiently and public health and safety [9]. The NCSP is focused particularly on the protection of CNII against cyber threats. Alongside clear and effective governance, the NCSP provides mechanisms for improving the trust and cooperation among the public and private sectors. NCSP also focuses on enhancing skills and capacity building as well as enhancing research and development initiatives towards self-reliance. It also maps out emergency readiness initiatives and dictates a programme of compliance and assurance across the whole of the CNII. The NCSP also reaches out to Malaysia's international partners and allies. The policy describes methods that Malaysia can share knowledge with the region and the world on cyber security related matters. Malaysia developed NCSP as a proactive step in protecting critical sectors against cyber threats.

Thus, CNII would probably be the target of terrorists wanting to

cripple any country and disrupt its critical services. This includes warfare attacks against a nation's state and forcing critical communications channels and information systems infrastructure and assets to fail or to destroy them. These would be crippling the electrical distribution grid by shutting down control systems, disrupting national telecommunications network services, sabotaging air traffic control systems, attacking oil refineries and gas transmission systems by crippling control systems, destroying or altering banking information on a massive scale and gaining access to dam control systems in order to cause massive floods.

Why would cyber terrorist decide to use ICT rather than opt to the usual methods such as assassination, hostage-taking and guerrilla warfare? By using ICT, a handful of cyber terrorists can cause greater damage to a country than an army of a few thousands. Countries which are increasingly dependent on ICT, especially those that have many systems connecting to the Internet, are vulnerable to these kinds of attacks. The paradox is that, the more wired a nation is, the more vulnerable it is to cyber attacks. In the era where the usage of ICT is a necessity, it is regrettably also highly vulnerable to attacks and opens a new dimension of threats.

### *The Use of ICT and Cyberspace by Terrorist*

Terrorist groups may use Internet as the medium for hostile activities such as hacking, spreading negative propaganda and promoting extreme activities. They may also use the Internet for the purpose of inter-group communication and inter-networked grouping. Likewise, there are reported cases claiming that cyber terrorists use websites in Malaysia to host terrorism activities [10, 11]. Therefore, it is timely to investigate this pressing phenomenon in Malaysia.

To date, there are several notable works on cyber terrorism activities on the Internet that have been conducted by several researchers. Based on a study [9] conducted at the Australian Federal Police, terrorists used the Internet to spread propaganda and promote extreme ideology. Analysis was done on the Al-Qaeda related websites such as Yahoo Groups, bulletin boards and forums. These groups normally manipulate cyber media to release their manifestos and propaganda statements. In executing the study, an English translation engine was engaged to translate the content on those sites.

Chen et al. [10] conducted several experiments on cyber terrorism activities in major websites and blogs such as YouTube and Second Life. They also studied popular hosting service providers such as blogspot.com and wordpress.com. Their findings indicated that the virtual world was

abused to promote cyber terrorism activities. Some of the videos published in YouTube were related to explosives, attacks, bombings and hostage taking. Seemingly, most of the searching was conducted manually using Google's search engine. They recommended developing an automated, evidence-based collection and analysis tool that can help understand the cyber terrorism phenomenon more effectively.

Another study focused on websites that were categorised as Foreign Terrorist Organisations by the United States. The focus of Conway research [7] was on terrorist groups' use of the Internet, in particular the content of their websites, and their misuse of the medium. Based on the study, the terrorist groups used the Internet for inter-group communication and inter-networked grouping.

Zhang et al. [12] who works on the Dark Web project since 2002 has identified 10,000 extremist websites and developed technology to "mine" the conversations and content on the forums. They used "spiders" or software programmes that troll the Internet scanning for suspicious sites using key words and other analysis. They identified that terrorist and extremist groups are increasingly using the Internet to promulgate their agendas.

There are evidences that cyber terrorists use ICT and cyberspace as a medium for hostile activities. The findings indicated that:

- i. The cyberspace is used to release manifestos and propaganda statements [9, 10, 11];
- ii. Aside from generating propaganda, the cyberspace is also used to coordinate missions or call meetings and to recruit new members [8, 10];
- iii. There have been several cases reported in the media where the cyberspace has helped terrorists in their cyber activities [8, 9, 10];
- iv. The virtual world is indeed used to promote cyber terrorism activities. Some of the videos published on the Internet are related to explosives, attacks, bombing and hostage-taking [11]; and
- v. Some terrorist groups use the cyberspace for the purpose of inter-group communication and inter-networked grouping [8].

### *Challenges Encountered in Dealing with Cyber Terrorism*

Cyber terrorism includes warfare attacks against a nation's state and forcing ICT infrastructure and assets to fail or to destroy them. It is



argued that cyber terrorism requires political motives and the use of violence. The objective is to create fear within a target population where monetary gain is not the main focus. Based on the nature of a borderless world, challenges that the authorities may face are:

- *A Clear Line of Cyber Terrorism Activities.* In defining cyber terrorist activities, it is necessary to segment action and motivation. There is no doubt that acts of hacking can have the same consequences as acts of terrorism. But in the legal sense, the intentional act of hacking must be a part of the terrorist action. In most cases, the motive is more of computer-related crimes. These cases include stealing somebody else's identity and hacking into a bank's system to gain easy money. Perhaps this is not considered cyber terrorism as the motive is more in line with computer-related crimes.
- *Technical Impediments.* Many terrorist groups used ICT as a means to conduct operations without being detected by the authorities. They utilised features of the Internet that enables users to remain anonymous. Therefore, it is hard for the authorities to trace or link the web activity or gather any personal information that may assist in identifying the criminal offenders.
- *Legislative Aspect.* One of the challenges in addressing the issue of handling offences committed in cyberspace is to ensure that the law is relevant to the cyber world at present. Despite the fact that some of the existing legislation deals with computer-related crimes, most of the legislation today are conventional laws and may not be adequate to address issues that relate to the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes.
- *Enforcement and Prosecution of Internet Offenders.* Some of the existing laws were written to address matters arising under an environment which does not include Internet technology and are confined to the physical boundaries of the country. In such circumstances, enforcement of the laws and prosecution of Internet offenders can be a challenge, especially in relation to the investigation of cross-border crimes.
- *Public-Private Partnership.* There are several issues with regards to the cooperation between the private and public sector. These issues include the unwillingness of agencies and organisations to share sensitive information such as information on cyber security incidents and system vulnerabilities. This is due to the perception and belief that by exposing such

information, it will give negative impacts to their organisations. Another relevant factor that can be considered as a restrictive factor in nurturing the cooperation between both sectors is the different level of understanding on information security itself.

### *CyberSecurity Malaysia Initiatives in Providing a Secure and Safer Cyber Space*

- *Strengthening International Inter-Agency Cooperation.* In acknowledging the cross border activities of cyber terrorism, CyberSecurity Malaysia has established strategic partnerships with many countries in the world through international collaborations. Among these collaborations are the APCERT (Asia Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team), which is a collaboration of 22 computer emergency response teams (CERTs) from 16 economies in the Asia Pacific region and the OIC-CERT (Organisation of Islamic Conference - Computer Emergency Response Team), which is a collaboration of 20 incident response teams from 18 OIC countries. The international cooperation area of NCSP has the objectives to ensure the Internet security in the region through genuine information sharing, trust and cooperation. Terrorist's use of the internet is among the growing concern of the international community, and the subject is often discussed at various international forums and conferences.
- *Promoting Public-Private Partnership.* The complexity and interdependency of the CNII has become more visible and unavoidable. It is observed that Malaysia's critical information infrastructures are mainly operated by private stakeholders due to Malaysia's privatisation policy. As a result, the situation requires an effective Public Private Cooperation (PPC) among the CNII operators and the government to ensure that CNII are adequately protected. The cooperation between the private sectors and the public sectors are essential as both sectors are dependent on one another. The most important element in the cooperation is the trusted information sharing which should be instituted between the public and private sectors, exchanging information such as specific threats, awareness raising, exercises, recommendations and so forth. The information-sharing exchange would be effective and efficient if the public and private sectors are willing to collaborate more and trust each

other. If this can be done, the CNII of the country would be more resilient in the future.

- *Promoting Exchange of Information and Good Practice.* There is also a need to further promote the exchange of information and good practices between countries in preventing cyber terrorism and countering the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. CyberSecurity Malaysia had participated as speakers and moderators in the APEC Seminar on Protection of Cyberspace from Terrorist Use and Attacks for the past years. During the seminar, CyberSecurity Malaysia shared experience in implementing cyber security initiatives in Malaysia. Besides that, CyberSecurity Malaysia is also involved in multilateral cooperation in cyber security under APCERT and OIC-CERT. CyberSecurity Malaysia is one of the Steering Committees responsible for the general operating policies, procedures, guidelines and other related governance matters pertaining to APCERT. The establishment of OIC-CERT which is the affiliated institution of the OIC was spearheaded by CyberSecurity Malaysia. It is a platform for members of the OIC countries to collaborate in the area of cyber security. Presently, CyberSecurity Malaysia holds chairmanship of OIC-CERT for the term 2009 – 2011.
- *Strengthening Technical Capabilities.* In catering to the wave of ICT advancements, CyberSecurity Malaysia introduced Cyber999 Help Centre, a one-stop-centre that receives and channels all reports lodged by the public to the relevant agencies. This service was officially launched on 7 July 2009 by the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation of Malaysia. With the existence of the Cyber999 Help Centre, the public has an avenue to seek advice and technical support on matters related to cyber security incidents. CyberSecurity Malaysia also has established the CyberCSI service under its Digital Forensics Department. The services provide technical assistance to regulatory bodies and enforcement agencies via Digital Forensic Investigation and Expert Testimonials.
- *Promoting Cyber Security Awareness.* Promoting cyber security awareness is one of the major activities conducted by CyberSecurity Malaysia. Part of the efforts is to educate and increase awareness of the public, specifically on cyber threats; among others the use of internet by terrorist groups for networking, information sharing, communications, propagandas, recruitment, fundraising, etc. The awareness

programmes by CyberSecurity Malaysia are conducted through CyberSAFE (Cyber Security Awareness for Everyone). In view of this, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation through CyberSecurity Malaysia has initiated the development of the National Strategy for Cyber Security Acculturation and Capacity Building Programme under the Culture of Security and Capacity Building of the NCSP. The project commenced early this year and is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. The objective of this project is to lay out a 5-year comprehensive strategy for cyber security awareness and capacity building. It is hoped that through the implementation of this strategy, the Malaysian community will be equipped with sufficient cyber security knowledge to face the risks and challenges in cyber environment.

### *Conclusion*

The cyberspace has enabled asymmetric warfare, where individual perpetrators such as extremists, terrorist groups and cyber criminals possess the abilities and capabilities to inflict damage to a nation's well-being. In this digital age, the concept of cyber terrorism or the use of cyberspace to carry out terrorist activities has emerged. By using ICT, terrorists can bring about greater damage or leave the nation with difficult conditions due to disruption of the critical services. Cyber terrorism can thus be seen as a relevant threat due to its strong relation to ICT and cyberspace. Therefore, there is a need to have a strategy at the national level to protect CNII from cyber terrorism activities. In Malaysia, the government has implemented the NCSP in order to address cyber threats and risks to CNII. It is a proactive initiative whereby the NCSP has developed action plans to mitigate such risks. Subsequently, CyberSecurity Malaysia also plays important roles in providing excellent services in educating, safeguarding and strengthening cyber security initiatives in the country. Together, we can create a secure and safer cyber space for the world.

### *References*

- [1] Australia's Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2002.
- [2] ACT 574 Penal Code (Revised - 1997) Chapter VIA – Offences

- [3] Barry C. Collin. (1996). *The Future of CyberTerrorism: Where the Physical and Virtual Worlds Converge*. 11<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium Criminal Justice Issues.
- [4] Denning, D. E. (2000). *Cyberterrorism: Testimony given to the House Armed Services Committee Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism*.
- [5] James A. L. (2002). *Assessing the Risks of Cyberterrorism, Cyber War and Other Cyber Threats*. Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- [6] Lourdeau, K. (2004). *Congress Testimony*.  
<http://www.fbi.gov/congress/congress04/lourdeau022404.htm>
- [7] Conway, M. (2007). *Reality Bytes: Cyberterrorism and Terrorist 'Use' of the Internet*.  
[http://www.firstmonday.org/ISSUES/issue7\\_11/conway/](http://www.firstmonday.org/ISSUES/issue7_11/conway/)
- [8] Kanon, Sharon. (2008). *Israeli Study Shows US a Digital Haven for Terrorists*.  
<http://www.israel21c.org/bin/en.jsp?enScript=printversion.jsp&enD>
- [9] <http://cnii.cybersecurity.my>
- [10] Farrel, L. (2007). *Terrorism and the Internet*. Speaker during Terrorism and the Internet Workshop, Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC - [www.jclec.com](http://www.jclec.com)), Semarang, Indonesia.
- [11] Chen, H., Thoms, S. and Fu, T. J. (2008). *Cyber Extremism in Web 2.0: An Exploratory Study of International Jihadist Groups*. Forthcoming, IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics.
- [12] Zhang, Y., Zeng, S., Huang, CN., Fan, L., Yu, X., Dang, Y., Larson, C., Denning, D., Roberts, N., and Chen, H. (2010). *Developing a Dark Web Collection and Infrastructure for Computational and Social Sciences*, IEEE International ISI Conference.

# DE-RADICALISATION IN INDONESIA: DISCOURSES AND STRATEGIES

*Adam D Tyson*

## ABSTRACT

*This article traces the convergence of counter-terrorism strategies and de-radicalisation discourses in Indonesia. Key zones of contestation include the classroom with young impressionable pupils, modern society with alienated and dislocated citizens, prison cellblocks with fertile grounds for the spread of radical and pathological ideas, and new media with near-unlimited scope for the diffusion of knowledge. As in any country, Indonesia's challenge to terror is imperfect and subject to reversals. Counter-terrorism is a means to limit, manage and mitigate terror. Very few claim to be able to eradicate such a threat. Beyond lethal force, there are reflexive, subtle, innovative strategies at the disposal of the Indonesian authorities. Given the constant friction between civil liberties and democratic rights on the one hand, and security imperatives on the other, governing authorities and policymakers are advised to continue consolidating political reforms that began in the transition of May 1998.*

*Keywords: counter-terrorism; de-radicalisation; Indonesia; Islam; strategy; discourse*

## *Introduction*

In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 World Trade Centre and Pentagon attacks, Christopher Hitchens (2002) correctly noted that the ceaseless deployment of the word terrorism had a suffocating effect. Fatigued lexicographers struggled to rescue the word from overly-induced political statements, ambiguous editorials, hypocritical policy pronouncements and the misguided essentialism of what Mamdani (2002:766) termed as 'culture talk'. Despite these reservations, Hitchens (2002) portrayed terrorism as an extension of nihilism, with terrorists being irrational, cruel and vicious, fanatically demanding the impossible at gunpoint or knife-edge. It is important therefore to rescue the term from obscurity, to retain it as an important instrument of condemnation.

Some scholars refuse outright to engage in terror debates, dissatisfied with the loaded nature of the term. Professor Duncan

McCargo, for instance, specialises in the southern Thai conflict. In a *Guardian* column in 2009 McCargo discussed the bloody violence and insurgency at length without once using the term terrorism. This column generated 87 online responses from enlightened readers, and terrorism rapidly became the focal point of the discussion. One respondent pleaded (unsuccessfully) with McCargo to ‘show some honesty and state that he doesn’t support the murderous terrorists who are destroying southern Thailand’.

As a point of departure, the professional discourse in Southeast Asia has gradually shifted from terrorism to the clinical study of radicals, radicalism and lengthy processes of de-radicalisation. Islam remains at the centre of the debate, a focal point of reference at all levels. Reacting to increasingly derogatory caricatures of Islam filtering out of influential Western media and literature, Chandra Muzaffar (2009:1) warns of ‘ignorance compounded by prejudice’ and ‘aversion alloyed with antagonism’. A critical look at the ideational battleground reinforces the fact that simplistic dichotomous categories of good Muslims versus bad Muslims are not very helpful. Rather, one should strive for the sort of agonising introspection and deepening of knowledge that Booth and Dunne (2002) advocate. This should begin with a survey of scholarly work on Islam in Southeast Asia, starting with Hefner’s (2000) civil Islam, for instance, and advancing to discursive contests such as Rahim’s (2006) liberal Islam versus literal Islam.

Beyond military metrics and spectacle wars, secret intelligence and elite policing, there is a highly-contested discursive sphere that deserves further attention. This article therefore traces the convergence of counter-terrorism strategies and de-radicalisation discourses in Indonesia. Key zones of contestation include the classroom with young impressionable pupils, modern society with alienated and dislocated citizens, prison cellblocks with fertile grounds for the spread of radical and pathological ideas, and new media with near-unlimited scope for the diffusion of knowledge. Such an investigation benefits from the recent work of Abrahms (2008) on infiltration strategies, and Sidney Jones (2010) on the dangers of Indonesia’s ‘word warriors’, those non-violent radicals who frequently fall under the radar and are difficult to contain.

### *Terrorism is a Loaded Term*

Not all observers agree with Hitchens (2002) about the fundamental irrationality of terrorists. A glut of recent studies and research projects have sought to reveal the ‘strategic logic’ of suicide terrorism

(Pape 2003), the ‘geometry’ of terrorism (Black 2004), the ‘motives for martyrdom’ (Moghadam 2008-09) and the ‘organisational capabilities’ of terrorist groups (Horowitz 2010). The moral relativism of the terror debate is captured by Noam Chomsky (2002), who goes to great lengths to distinguish between the terrorism of the weak and the terrorism of the powerful (usually read as state-sponsored terror). The pirate’s maxim is used to illustrate Chomsky’s main argument: when a pirate in a small vessel attacks the sea it is the act of a thief, whereas a powerful ruler can invade the whole world with naval force and be celebrated as an emperor. Terrorism is generally argued to be a weapon of the weak (asymmetric power), an act perpetrated by individuals or groups against civilian targets for specific purposes (usually symbolic, often political). Provoking an overreaction or frenzied response has emerged as perhaps the key objective of terrorism (Zakaria 2010).

The imperfect process of countering terrorism and defending against radicalism requires flexible strategies that are considered an art by some and a science by others. There is no panacea or magical formula, so we do our best to cope with and adjust to this new age of ‘sacred terror’ (Rapoport 1984). The best general strategy for Indonesia is to strengthen democratic institutions and continue to devolve authority to the outer provinces to ensure political legitimacy, redistribute wealth and quell unrest. Sydney Jones (2008) calls for an integrated de-radicalisation programme, directing attention towards the Indonesian courts, the police, prison systems, schoolhouses and new media outlets, and warns against the establishment of a repressive Malaysian-style Internal Security Act.

In an ongoing discursive contest, Indonesian authorities continue to enlist properly vetted Islamic leaders and Muslim scholars with ‘epistemic authority’ to dispel myths, counter radical teachings and dismantle extremist ideologies (Kruglanski et al. 2010). By logical extension, this war of words is taking place in the classroom, and Indonesian authorities have long been targeting Islamic boarding schools such as al-Mukmin and Darusy Syahadah (*Pikiran Rakyat* 2009). There are also spontaneous initiatives by civil Islamic organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama aimed at countering distorted teachings and promoting ‘true’ religious values and model citizens (Sijabat 2010). Not all counter-terrorism measures are quite so quaint, of course. The killing of three bank robbers on 19 September 2010 with suspected links to terror groups in Medan by Densus 88 (Indonesia’s elite counter-terrorism unit) demonstrates that a grand integrated strategy requires both lethal force and gradual de-radicalisation. Table A below demonstrates just how prevalent terrorism has been in recent years. From Aceh and Solo in Indonesia to Patani in southern Thailand and Mindanao in southern Philippines, radical



Islam has been grabbing headlines, confounding policymakers and security forces alike. Friction between civil liberties and democratic rights on the one hand, and security imperatives on the other, is constant.

*Table A – Chronology of Terrorist Bombings in Indonesia*

<b>Date of Bombing</b>	<b>Particulars</b>
1 August 2000	Philippines Embassy in Jakarta
27 August 2000	Malaysian Embassy complex in Jakarta [no fatalities]
13 September 2000	Jakarta Stock Exchange
24 December 2000	Christmas Eve bombings in Jakarta, West Java (Bekasi, Sukabumi, Bandung), East Java (Mojokerto), Nusa Tenggara Barat (Mataram), Sumatra (Medan, Pematang, Siantar), Batam, Riau (Pekanbaru)
23 September 2001	Atrium Plaza Senen, Jakarta
12 October 2001	KFC restaurant, Makassar [no fatalities]
6 November 2001	Australian International School, Pejaten, Jakarta [no fatalities]
1 January 2002	New Years bomb outside of a chicken restaurant in Jakarta
12 October 2002	Kuta and the American Consulate in Denpasar, Bali
5 December 2002	McDonalds in Makassar, South Sulawesi
3 February 2003	Police headquarters, Wisma Bhayangkan, Jakarta [no fatalities]
27 April 2003	Terminal 2F, Soekarno-Hatta International Airport
5 August 2003	JW Marriot Hotel Jakarta
10 January 2004	Cafe Bukit Sampoddo Indah, Palopo, South Sulawesi
26 July 2004	General Elections Commission, Jakarta [no fatalities]
9 September 2004	Australian Embassy in Jakarta
12 December 2004	Church of Immanuel, Palu, Central Sulawesi [no fatalities]
21 March 2005	Two bombings in Ambon, Eastern Indonesia
1 October 2005	Kuta and Jimbaran, Bali
31 December 2005	Marketplace in Palu, Central Sulawesi
11 November 2006	A&W restaurant, East Jakarta

17 July 2009	JW Marriot and Ritz-Carleton hotels, Jakarta
<i>Total of 22 terrorist bombings, 296 fatalities</i>	

*Psychopathology and Prison Islam*

Pathological personalities are said to be drawn to terrorism, along with those experiencing social alienation, geographical displacement, and especially those who are widowed. Therefore the importance of group solidarity and shared ideology in developing strong affective ties with fellow terrorists is absolute (Crenshaw 2000; Abrahms 2008). So what is to be done? Beyond the sledgehammer method (lethal force and coercion) a more nuanced approach has been called for to reduce terrorism’s social utility and attack the social bonds at the core of all such groups. Indeed, the goal of most modern de-radicalisation programmes has been to drive a wedge between members of an organisation by infiltration, breeding internal mistrust and resentment. One specific strategy has been to work with prisoners in order to cultivate a new group of informants and double-agents.

According to data compiled by the *International Crisis Group*, the majority of Indonesian men convicted of radical Islamic terrorism are held in Java (Cipinang prison Jakarta, Kedungpane prison Semarang, Kalisosok prison Porong), Bali (Kerobokan prison), and South Sulawesi (Makassar). Records from October 2007 showed 124 men arrested for terrorism, half of whom were considered Jemaah Islamiyah members. One obvious dilemma is whether to treat convicted terrorists separately from other inmates. ICG (2007) found that integration is better than segregation based on an analysis of solidarity-building and recruitment opportunities. Though the implementation of de-radicalisation programmes is highly secretive, and the new recruits anonymous, we know that the focus is usually either ideological or behavioural. Ideological efforts are about renouncing violence (attitudinal modification), while behavioural modification is about disengagement (Horgan 2008).

The dominant Indonesian approach from 2000 onwards has been creeping de-radicalisation. This ‘soft approach’ involves efforts to build extensive webs of paid informants and former militants, with the expectation that they can help persuade radical hardliners to change their ways through discursive efforts and material incentives. An obvious limitation to this approach is that former prisoners are regarded with suspicion and struggle to infiltrate radical groups. Moreover, prisoners that are granted early release are often inclined to renew their subversive

activities and rejoin militant movements. One example was the prisoner, Urwah, who renewed contact with the infamous Malaysian leader Noordin M. Top (now deceased) after being released from prison in March 2007. De-radicalisation is incremental and subject to reversals such as the devastating July 2009 suicide bombings of the JW Marriott and Ritz Carlton hotels in Jakarta. Nevertheless, cautious observers still believe that creeping de-radicalisation is paying dividends.

### *The Ideational Battleground*

One area that deserves careful and sustained scrutiny is the ideational battle being fought simultaneously on multiple fronts – inside prisons and classrooms, through new media, on the streets, and in the powerful corridors of officialdom. Mahmood Mamdani (2002) spoke out against the political campaign to reduce counter-terrorism to a civil war between good Muslims and bad Muslims, whereby the latter must be quarantined and ultimately exorcised. We are certainly free to object to the argument that there is a simple fault line dividing moderate, genuine Islam from radical extremist Islam. It must be recognised, however, that it is standard practice throughout Southeast Asia for authorities and media to deploy what are presented as moderate Islamic discourses in the effort to counter deviant teachings and transgressors. De-radicalisation is rather more complex, involving efforts to synthesise the ethics of Islam with various fields of modern thought, and to purge corrupt teachings and textual misreading by infiltrating schools, prisons and social forums.

Radicalism is generally associated with ‘pure’ Islam (Wahhabism, Salafism) and calls for a return to the straight path (*as-sirat al-mustaqim*) of original Islam. It is also a derivative of ‘literal’ Islam based on absolute *shari’a*, striving to create a secure area for Islamic life and law, where Islam is religion and regime (*din wa-dawla*). From these very basic precepts a cross-pollination of Indonesian extremists emerge from groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah, Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid, Darul Islam, Laskar Jihad and Front Pembela Islam (Hasan 2007).

Moderate beliefs, teachings and practices are associated with forms of ‘liberal’ Islam, usually eclectic, sometimes tolerant of Sufism, and ‘civil’ Islam that is supportive of democracy and the separation of mosque and state (Hefner 2000). In addition, a type of ‘silent’ *shari’a* exists whereby a degree of flexibility is granted to believers and practitioners, and certain issues are intentionally left for humans to resolve. A similar convergence of moderate individuals and groups occurs, for instance, within and between members of Nahdlatul Ulama,

Muhammadiyah, Jaringan Islam Liberal and Majelis Ulama Indonesia. The juxtaposition of moderate and radical has been widely criticised as overly simplistic, ossified and compartmentalised (Laffan 2003; Hamilton-Hart 2005; Renwick 2007). Indeed, it is argued that these two broad categories are not impervious, and that sensationalised portrayals of radical Islam disconnected from the mass of ordinary Muslims is distorting (Kolig 2005). There is a vast ideological spectrum in which radical ideas are integrated and blended in.

One of the most comprehensive efforts to dispel myths and correct popular misconceptions of the Islamic faith is Esposito's (2002) *Unholy War*. This book carefully examines concepts such as *hijra* and *jihad*, concepts that are used selectively by radicals and extremist 'holy warriors' to serve particular purposes and agendas. *Jihad* is by origin a prophetic call to people to reform their communities and live a good life based on religious belief (Esposito 2002:30). A defensive conception of *jihad* appears in the earliest Quranic verses in response to the *hijra* – forced emigration from hostile un-Islamic environments. Verse 22:39, for instance, grants leave to those who were wrongly expelled from their homes to fight, while verse 2:190 instructs that they must 'fight in the way of God with those who fight you, but aggress not: God loves not the aggressors'.

Discursive battles continue over the correct and precise readings of Quranic injunctions that provide detailed guidelines and regulations for the conduct of war. Some examples include verses 48:17 and 9:91 regarding who can fight and who is exempted, verse 2:192 about the cessation of hostilities, verse 47:4 on how prisoners should be treated, and verse 2:294 concerning proportionality in war. Several injunctions set out a mandate for peace (verses 8:61 and 4:90), while others address holy martyrdom (verses 3:157 and 3:169). Esposito (2002:30-33) concludes that it is forbidden to kill non-combatants, women and children, monks and rabbis, meaning that all are given the promise of immunity unless they had taken part in the fighting. With the expansion of Muslim communities, religious scholars (*ulama*, the learned) developed the *shari'a*, an Islamic law seen as the ideal blueprint for Muslim life (Esposito 2002:34). Over the ages, when Muslim rulers declared and conducted *jihad*, legal experts (*muftis*) provided legal opinions (*fatwas*) to legitimise or challenge *jihad*. In March 2010 a Pakistani cleric named Muhammad Tahir ul-Qadri joined in the race to discredit suicide terrorism by issuing a 600-page *fatwa* that supposedly 'leaves not a single stone unturned' (*Al Jazeera* 2010).

*De-radicalisation and Re-education*

In Indonesia there are plenty of word warriors competing for media attention, funding and influence in an ongoing discursive contest. The toxic preaching of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, a radical religious official (*ustadz*) based in Central Java, has long posed a dilemma for Indonesian authorities. One dilemma is censorship versus rightful expression in a legal, democratic context (Kolig 2005). Though Ba'asyir's views are noxious, bigoted and could possibly have residual effects (violence), it is widely held that they must not be met with authoritarian repression. This would undermine democratic achievements, legal mechanisms, and drive such ideas underground, leading to dangerous subterranean movements. After a series of arrests and linkages to the Bali bombings, Ba'asyir has been released and formed a new organisation called *Jamaah Ansharud Tauhid*, one that is above-ground and non-violent, though still rejects democracy and calls for immediate implementation of *shari'a* (ICG 2009).

Indonesian authorities typically rely on pragmatic strategies of intelligence gathering and policing, which are intended to compliment de-radicalisation and re-education programmes aimed at inoculating vulnerable groups against extremist ideology (ICG 2007). This involves enlisting the help of trusted or acceptable religious leaders to engage with and counter radical indoctrination and perverse notions of *jihad*. Controversially, counter-terrorism officials have been known to hold garden barbeques with convicted terrorists, offering them and their families reduced prison sentences, cash payments and health care in return for cooperation. After extensive assessment and clinical study, intelligence officers have determined that the perpetrators of terrorist acts such as the Bali bombings were 'sincere in their beliefs, yet sincerely ignorant' (Tumanggor 2007). They did not allow alternative discourses to challenge their convictions, which were based on religious distortions.

As a preventative measure, trusted religious figureheads are being sent out to schools, mosques and social forums, focusing on *pesantrons*, *pondoks* and *madrasahs* in order to reverse dangerous misperceptions. Beyond such 'travelling roadshows' authorities have made innovative use of new media and focused on youth activities (ICG 2007). It has been determined that many centres of learning are independent and family-owned, designing their own curriculum free from any affiliations, political or otherwise. By contrast, a number of state-run *pesantren* (or those following the state curriculum) have been linked to terrorism.

The triad of prison authorities, officially-sanctioned religious preachers and intelligence agents have been criticised for their narrow focus on *jihad* and rather thin re-education programme that has failed to

achieve a lasting ideological transformation. By contrast, a surprising development has emerged following a severe rift within *Jemaah Islamiyah* that led to the creation of the *Majelis Dakwah Umat Islam* (MDUI). MDUI members have engaged in spontaneous public outreach in order to counter violent religious teachings and practices. This demands a much more in-depth focus on faith in general, and MDUI stresses the importance of appropriate levels of knowledge and enlightenment that are needed prior to any discussions of religious precepts and injunctions.

### *Conclusion*

Returning to Sidney Jones's (2010) warning about Indonesia's word warriors and the new wave of 'jihad-by-the-pen', a small number of non-violent radical groupings such as *Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid* remain elusive and difficult to contain. Ward (2009) reinforces this view, analysing the inflammatory but ultimately passive organisation *Hizbut Tahrir* Indonesia. These organisations actively campaign on Facebook, maintain internet websites, blogs and publishing companies, and openly distribute leaflets on the streets in major metropolitan centres. As a general rule, the current government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono prefers subtle co-optation to direct confrontation, and therefore, the continuation of a quiet policy of containment can be expected.

As in any country, Indonesia's challenge to terror is imperfect and subject to reversals. Counter-terrorism is a means to limit, manage, and mitigate terror. Very few claim to be able to eradicate such a threat. Beyond lethal force, there are reflexive, subtle, innovative strategies at the disposal of Indonesian authorities. Obvious pitfalls remain, however, as many convicts reject de-radicalisation, terror leadership remains elusive, and corruption continues within the ranks of police, military and government officials. Nevertheless the dangers of collective thinking will have to be rigorously challenged, and all stakeholders in counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation in Indonesia must continue to engage simplifications and transcend unhelpful dichotomies.

### *References*

- Abrahms, Max. (2008). What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counter-terrorism Strategy. *International Security*, 32(4): 78–105.
- Al Jazeera. (2010, 2 March). Cleric Issues Anti-terror Fatwa. *Al Jazeera*.

- Black, Donald. (2004). The Geometry of Terrorism. *Sociological Theory*, 22(1): 14–25.
- Booth, Ken and Dunne, Tim (eds.). (2002). *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chomsky, Noam. (2002). *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, new edition, Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Crenshaw, Martha. (2000). The Psychology of Terrorism: an Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *Political Psychology*, 21(2): 405–420.
- Esposito, John L. (2002). *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hamilton-Hart, Natasha. (2005). Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Expert Analysis, Myopia and Fantasy. *The Pacific Review*, 18(3): 303–325.
- Hasan, Noorhaidi. (2007). The Salafi Movement in Indonesia: Transnational Dynamics and Local Development. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27(1): 83–94.
- Hefner, Robert. (2000). *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hitchens, Christopher. (2002, 18 November). Terrorism: Notes towards a Definition. *Slate*.
- Horgan, John. (2008). De-radicalisation or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counter-terrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 2(4): 3–8.
- Horowitz, Michael C. (2010). Nonstate Actors and the Diffusion of Innovations: The Case of Suicide Terrorism. *International Organization*, 64(1): 33–64.
- ICG. (2007). “De-radicalisation” and Indonesian Prisons. *International Crisis Group Asia Report No 142*, Jakarta/Brussels: ICG.
- ICG. (2009). Indonesia: the Hotel Bombings. *International Crisis Group Asia Briefing No 94*, Jakarta/Brussels: ICG.

- Jones, Sidney. (2008). Briefing for the New President: the Terrorist Threat in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 618(1): 69–78.
- Jones, Sidney. (2010, 16 July). Indonesia: Word Warriors. *South China Morning Post*.
- Kolig, Erich. (2005). Radical Islam, Islamic Fervour, and Political Sentiments in Central Java, Indonesia. *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, 4(1): 55–86.
- Kruglanski, Arie W., Gelfand, Michele and Gunaratna, Rohan. (2010). Detainee De-radicalisation: A Challenge for Psychological Science. *Association for Psychological Science*, 23(1): 1–3.
- Laffan, Michael. (2003). The Tangled Roots of Islamic Activism in Southeast Asia. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 16(3): 397–414.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. (2002). Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism. *American Anthropologist*, 104(3): 766–775.
- McCargo, Duncan. (2009, 1 December). Blood Flows in Thailand’s Deep South. *The Guardian*.
- Moghadam, Assaf. (2008-09). Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks. *International Security*, 33(3): 46–78.
- Muzaffar, Chandra. (2009). Islamophobia: A Historical Continuity. *SEARCCT’s Selection of Articles*, 1(1): 1–7
- Pape, Robert A. (2003). The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *The American Political Science Review*, 97(3): 343–361.
- Pikiran Rakyat. (2009, 24 July). Lagi, Peneror Bom Dibenkuk. *Pikiran Rakyat*.
- Rahim, Lily Z. (2006). Discursive Contest between Liberal and Literal Islam in Southeast Asia. *Policy and Society*, 25(4): 77–98.



- Rapoport, David C. (1984). Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions. *The American Political Science Review*, 78(3): 658–677.
- Renwick, Neil. (2007). Southeast Asia and the Global “War on Terror” Discourse. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 20(2): 249–265.
- Sijabat, Ridwan M. (2010, 3 May). NU to Take Leading Role in Combating Terrorism. *The Jakarta Post*.
- Tumanggor, Robert E. (2007). Indonesia’s Counter-terrorism Policy. *UNISCI Discussion Papers No 15*, 87–110.
- Ward, Ken. (2009). Non-violent Extremists? Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 63(2): 149–164.
- Zakaria, Fareed. (2010, 9 January). Don’t Panic: How Our Frenzied Response to Terrorism Only Feeds It. *Newsweek*.

# AUSTRALIA AND COUNTER-TERRORISM IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

*Bill Paterson*

## *ABSTRACT*

*Nine years after the September 11 attacks, and eight after the first Bali bombing, significant gains have been made against the challenge from the new and potent forms of terrorism these attacks represented. Our successes in combating terrorism have been greatly assisted by government attention to enhanced intelligence capabilities, the use of new and innovative technologies, effective criminal investigations, and the strengthening of law enforcement relationships within and between governments. For all of the progress made and enhancements in counter-terrorism capabilities, the international community now faces a more diffuse and diversified terrorist threat. The challenges ahead suggest that transnational terrorism will remain a first order security issue for governments for at least a generation. We are a long way from fully understanding the pathways to radicalisation and extremism, and research so far shows that these can indeed be divisive and highly individualised. The radicalising power of the internet, its widespread availability and utility to terrorists will present an additional complexity.*

*Keywords: Terrorism, Counter-terrorism, Al-Qa'eda, Australia, United States, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, intelligence, law enforcement, radicalisation, internet, prison, threat*

Terrorism has long been used by politically-motivated but weak groups to deliver an asymmetric impact against their opponents – an impact massively out of proportion to the input. Terrorism has principally targeted civilians, and not combatants, to magnify fear, uncertainty and disruption. Australian Prime Minister Rudd told the UN General Assembly in September 2010 that terrorism “continues to challenge civilised norms, to generate fear and insecurity, and to take innocent civilian lives in many parts of the world”.

The challenge for governments worldwide relates to the brand of terrorism inspired and propagated by Al Qa’eda (AQ). The AQ brand is

transnational, religiously-based and draws on a collective sense of both Muslim community and perceived grievances across the *ummah*. The brand is informed by a deceptively simple narrative. AQ's literalist interpretation of Islam is rooted in the seventh century, but is empowered by 21<sup>st</sup> century globalisation and modern technology. The issue has a particular complexity because a toxic political ideology has been built from an absolutist interpretation of a religious faith. Hence opposition to the violent ideology is painted by AQ's followers as being anti-Islamic.

While it should be set in context, transnational terrorism can have a disproportionate impact and present unique challenges for the security policymaker. It is both global and local, it is evolving and adapting, and is developing in terms of its use of technology, its operational security, its complexity, the nationalities involved, and its geographic nodes. It creates pressures for tougher countermeasures which can impact on rights, freedoms, convenience and costs. It is thus a more diffuse, dispersed and complex target than it may at first have seemed.

### *Terrorism as an Australian National Security Issue*

AQ-led, associated or inspired transnational terrorism will remain an enduring and evolving security threat internationally. While terrorism does not represent an existential threat or a territorial threat to Australia or Australian interests, it affects Australian interests and those of our allies and friends. For this reason, it is best considered as one of a number of enduring security challenges or contingencies with which Australia must deal and for which Australia must plan. The Australian Government's recent White Paper on Terrorism regarded terrorism as "a persistent and permanent feature of Australia's security environment".

Terrorism matters to the Australian people. It was still close to the top of foreign policy priorities identified by Australians in a recent poll by Australia's Lowy Institute for International Policy measuring public opinion toward foreign policy issues. Concerns about terrorism ranked only behind protecting the jobs of Australian workers and strengthening the economy. 110 Australian citizens have lost their lives in nine major international terrorist attacks since and including the September 11 attacks. Many more have suffered injury and loss. In addition, the Australian Embassy in Jakarta was badly damaged by a terrorist attack in 2004. Australia, too, has not been immune to the development, evident elsewhere in the Western world, of a small number of "home grown" terrorists within the Australian community.

*The Evolution of US Counter-Terrorism Policy*

The Obama administration in the United States has narrowed and focussed the Bush administration's comprehensive response to the events of September 11 and the challenge they represented, not only to the United States, but to global order and security. President Obama articulated his administration's objective as being to "disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qa'eda and other extremist networks around the world". The US has continued an intelligence-led, precision military approach to the elimination of AQ leadership and known operatives, those of its affiliates and associates, and its safe havens. It has sought to integrate policies toward Afghanistan and Pakistan as two aspects of the one problem. It has focussed on matching public messaging with resources. As recently as 6 October 2009 President Obama described AQ as "the principal threat to the American people", and on 17 August 2009 he described Afghanistan as "a war of necessity". His administration committed to a return to orthodox legal process and has sought to cast the challenges of terrorism in language that is forthright, but not offend particular constituencies.

On 27 May 2010 President Obama released a new National Security Strategy for the United States. The statement noted that "this is not a global war against a tactic – terrorism, or a religion – Islam. We are at war with a specific network, al-Qa'eda, and its terrorist affiliates who support efforts to attack the United States, our allies and partners". A series of investigations and disrupted or unsuccessful incidents in the US has demonstrated that this is not only a problem external to the United States. The US itself is not immune from home-grown terrorism – even if external links are evident in nearly all the cases discovered so far, a pattern replicated in other Western countries. Preventing attacks on the homeland has been central to US counter-terrorism since September 11, but has been given new urgency by these incidents.

The US-led strategy, first in Iraq and now in Afghanistan, has changed from one driven by a counter-terrorism imperative, and implemented through essentially conventional warfare and the application of overwhelming and hi-tech force, to a sophisticated counter-insurgency (COIN) model. This approach is focussed principally on population protection and the provision of services, and building Afghan security forces and institutions will undertake the long-term law and order and stability task. An almost separate element, as this policy has evolved, is the precision targeting of key AQ leadership figures and their havens in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas. The aim of these twin drivers is to build security as well as create the conditions for economic and political progress to ensure that the local populations will deny AQ renewed safe

haven.

Commentators including Bruce Hoffman and Anthony Cordesman have argued that failing to defend Afghanistan will almost certainly give AQ new momentum and greater freedom of action. It would also strengthen the hand of the Pakistan Taliban and the growing extremist alliance and capability in Pakistan. In the end, we are dealing with a globalised extremist movement, and if it is not addressed and neutralised at its source, its credibility as well as operational capability will be sustained and potentially enhanced.

### *What Progress has been made in Addressing the Terrorist Challenge?*

AQ and its affiliates have failed in their transnational aspiration to establish a caliphate. The Muslim masses have not been mobilised by AQ's narrative. There is increasing awareness that terrorists kill mostly innocent Muslims and are most active in Muslim-majority countries. In 2009 in Pakistan, 87 suicide bombers killed 1300 people, 90 per cent of whom were civilians. This pattern is replicated elsewhere. AQ's narrative justifying violence and targeting the West and 'apostate' Muslim governments has simply failed to resonate with the wider Muslim community.

There has been a steady elimination of AQ's senior leadership. AQ's sanctuary in the FATA in Pakistan is being squeezed and the core leadership steadily eliminated. AQ's senior leadership is effectively no longer in Afghanistan. Only small numbers of lower-level fighters remain. The senior leadership is by necessity preoccupied with survival (and propaganda). Its outlook is bleak, but it is not yet terminal. AQ's senior leadership is arguably no longer a 'doer' but a commentator and propagandiser. Its operational relevance is diminished. This naturally has implications for the brand's stature, unity and appeal, and its ability to recruit and attract finance. Nevertheless, AQ has proven durable and its capacity to regenerate should not be underestimated.

The presence of AQ in Iraq (AQI) has declined. The occupation of Iraq and a sense of Sunni disenfranchisement had acted as catalysts for the growth of AQI. But AQI's sectarianism and extreme violence has alienated the people of Iraq. The interests of Iraqi tribes were essentially local and they did not embrace the AQ narrative. The people of Iraq have a strong desire for peace after an extended period of hardship and turmoil. AQI remains a shrunken but still violent force, and there is potential for AQI to rebuild as a focus of sectarian violence if the Iraqi political systems were to fail.

The dismemberment of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and some of its splinter groups in Indonesia has been a significant achievement. Over 450 members or affiliates of JI have been arrested and more than 200 jailed. The international significance of this achievement is that JI had links to AQ and shared AQ's ideology and aspirations. The attacks in Jakarta on 17 July 2009, however, served as a wake-up call, demonstrating the potency, durability and organisational skill of splinter groups which have survived the pressure which had been placed on JI by Indonesian police. The 17 July attacks were followed by an impressive and effective Indonesian-led response, with the elimination of Noordin Top and, more recently, Dulmatin, following exposure of a major new terrorist training camp in Aceh in February this year. Despite the success, this discovery in Aceh served to remind us of the enduring nature of the extremist fringe in Indonesia.

Elsewhere, governments, including through improved international collaboration, have successfully pre-empted or prevented key plots. Prevention and disruption are often not evident to the general public, but significant successes have been achieved. These include the Trans-Pacific and Trans-Atlantic multiple aircraft liquids/gels plots, the LAX millennium plot, the shoe bomber, and attack planning plots in Australia, the US, the UK and elsewhere. Increasingly smart intelligence and investigation techniques have helped to uncover cells, as have enhanced protective security measures which act as a deterrent. The Abdulmuttulab/Detroit plot on 25 December 2009, however, pointed to gaps in information-sharing and the translation of intelligence into pre-emptive action. Remedial steps being implemented in many countries hopefully will ensure our ability to detect and intervene before the commission of terrorist acts continues to improve. However there is a common expression in the CT world, originally ascribed to the IRA, that the terrorist has to succeed only once, whereas we have to do so every time.

Improved counter-terrorism capabilities in many partner countries also have played a significant role in combating terrorism. These capabilities include the development of intelligence, law enforcement, forensics and biometrics, financial tracking, aviation security, protection of critical infrastructure, and accounting for and management of explosives, chemical, biological agents and radioactive materials.

But all these indicators of progress do not amount to victory or a time to lessen our focus or vigilance: we are dealing with a complex set of issues and it is not possible to declare that any part of this problem has been solved or eliminated. Indeed, we face significant challenges ahead.

### *The Challenges Ahead*

For all of the progress and enhancements made in counter-terrorism capabilities, the international community now faces a more diffuse and diverse terrorist threat. Affiliates, franchises, fellow travellers and self-radicalised individuals are dispersed over a wide geographic area – harder to detect and hence harder to pre-empt. Attacks may increasingly be small-scale, opportunistic, with little preparation, training or lead-times. Failed attacks may be considered successful due to their disruptive effects, demonstration of vulnerability and generation of fear and uncertainty. The spectrum of possible modes and scale of attack has also widened – from extensively planned mass casualty attacks, which are now harder to undertake as they more likely to be detected, to ‘micro-terrorism’ – simple local actions on the part of individuals radicalised, for instance, over the internet. The threat can often be linked to failing or deeply troubled states, to separatist insurgencies and sometimes to state actors – but the new paradigm is that it can also arise internally in developed and democratic societies.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border region remains central to international efforts to combat terrorism. In October 2009 US Defence Secretary Robert Gates said “the Afghan-Pakistan border is the modern epicentre of jihad”. It remains the destination of choice for extremists from elsewhere to link up and to train. The challenges in Pakistan go beyond dealing with AQ, and have been deepened by the natural disasters and political upheavals Pakistan has faced in recent years. The Pashtun Taliban and groups such as *Lashkar e Tayyiba* now have a life of their own, drawing some public support from their social networks and capacity to provide services where government services are lacking. Pakistan presents a very diverse spectrum of militant organisations. The groups potentially represent a threat to the stability and effectiveness of elected government in Pakistan.

In Indonesia, despite the impressive record of successes, a diffuse and persistent extremist fringe is likely to persist, which is hardly surprising in a large and diverse democracy. The recent discovery and disruption of a major extremist network in Aceh arguably illustrates both Indonesian counter-terrorism success, but also the durability and evolution of the challenge. The Aceh coalition of extremists was surprisingly large, committed, experienced and aimed at developing an AQ affiliate in Indonesia. It was ambitious, experienced and was planning a Mumbai-style armed assault, including a plan to kill President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Aceh demonstrates that extremist capability may have been reduced but has not been eliminated. The risk of regeneration remains, and

key individuals are still at large.

The geographic spread of terrorism is increasing. AQ-related terrorism in Europe has generally been ‘home grown’, mainly amongst immigrant communities. The sharpest domestic security threat in the UK has come from the British Pakistani community. Prosecutions in the UK have shown evidence of links between extremist groups in Pakistan and expatriate communities in the UK. Complex issues of identity, integration, employment and social opportunity are involved, as elsewhere in Europe and the Western world.

Evidence of AQ-related extremist violence is increasing in Africa. AQ in the Magreb (AQIM) is active in the largely ungoverned spaces in North Africa and south into the Sahel. Somalia is increasingly being drawn into the AQ franchise network. There are a growing number of foreign fighters involved and some émigré Somalis have returned to join violent jihad. The attacks in Uganda at the time of the 2010 World Cup, and previous attacks in Kenya, demonstrate the growing reach of Somali or related groups into East Africa.

Yemen has become a worrying safe haven for terrorists. AQ-linked terrorists in AQ in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) pose a particular threat to Saudi Arabia as well as to targets in Yemen itself. Yemen may increasingly be serving as a magnet or hub for extremists elsewhere – including non-Arab ‘cleanskins’ – to congregate, plan and train, in much the same way Afghanistan was used during the 1990s. Lebanon, too, remains a crossroads for extremist activity. Militancy is growing, including in Palestinian refugee camps.

AQ influences and its extremist narrative have also informed cases of violent extremist activity and attack planning in Australia. Domestic terrorist cases have had international links. AQ is a global brand and it has had a following in Australia.

The extent to which AQ’s attraction will be undermined by setbacks and the loss of experienced leaders will be a key question for analysts and policy makers. How resilient will AQ be, and how potent its message, with its operational capability reduced? What impact would elimination of its “iconic” leadership have? The AQ narrative will outlast the leadership but it may lose much of its revolutionary force and attraction.

The radicalising power of the internet, its widespread availability and utility to terrorists presents a major challenge. The internet will be used by violent jihadists to develop a new generation of ‘self-radicalised’ extremists, dispersed, unaffiliated and largely invisible to intelligence or law enforcement agencies. The internet is a propaganda and recruitment tool, a source of data and knowledge transfer, a fundraiser, a medium of



funds transfer, and is used for operational planning. The technology is accessible, low cost, immediate, portable, unregulated, and global. Opportunities for social networking via You Tube, Facebook, and Twitter provide additional opportunities for terrorism-related communications. Difficulties arise for governments, particularly in liberal societies, in disrupting or manipulating the messages sent via the internet, particularly given the rate of proliferation of jihadist websites which number in the thousands.

September 11 represented a paradigm shift in terrorism. It was transnational, franchised, aimed at causing mass casualties and was empowered by information technology. What methods can we expect in the future? Mass casualty-styled attacks or ‘loners’, structured armed assaults (*fedayeen* attacks), suicide bombers, or improvised explosive devices? The use of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials (CBRN) in a terrorist attack, while less likely, would have the biggest impact in terms of casualties. Other methods, which are low cost but have high impact, are growing in sophistication. Cheap off-the-shelf technology can be used as an enabler. For example, in the Mumbai attacks, we saw the use of relatively cheap and commercially available technologies such as the Global Positioning System (GPS), Google Earth, Voice Over Internet Protocol, Twitter, mobile phones, commercially-available encryption, remote control units, and digital watches as triggers. Aviation (and mass transport) will remain attractive targets, and physical attacks rather than cyber, for instance, may be preferred because they inflict casualties, cause physical damage and get media attention. Devices concealed in body cavities, used in at least two attacks or attempts in the last two years, represent a new challenge to detection.

There is increasing evidence of violent extremist ideas being spread in prisons by persons convicted of terrorism offences. Patchy efforts at de-radicalisation or disengagement programmes have so far produced mixed results. Another dilemma for governments is how to manage the interaction of the prisoners. Should persons convicted of terrorism be separated or allowed to mix with persons convicted of other offences, thus enhancing the opportunity for them to radicalise other prisoners? Or should they be detained together, and separated from the rest of the prison population? Both approaches have risks and benefits. Even more challenging, many detained or convicted terrorists are now completing terms in detention and re-entering mainstream civilian life.

Issues surrounding the financing of terrorism are likely to impact on both terrorist organisations and on governments. Although terrorist attacks are relatively cheap to carry out, groups still need money for travel, training and the acquisition of material. Terrorist organisations have

historically sought funding from followers to support the families of martyrs. Informal channels of money transfer, for example *hawala*, and cash couriers are difficult for law enforcement officials to stop. Porous borders, expatriate labour, connections to other criminal activity and to smuggling present major law enforcement challenges.

The continuing impact of the global economic crisis on government budgets, combined with other expensive commitments and competing interests, may cause governments to lose interest or scale back their involvement, particularly if AQ were to be largely neutralised. Public opinion is already negative about extended military involvements, and the absence of attacks within countries could lead to – or demand – some re-ordering of priorities. In many countries, including Australia, pressure is on police and intelligence agencies to shave budgets and personnel, and for police to restore focus on other forms of crime.

### *The Effectiveness of Government Policies*

Efforts by governments to combat terrorism have been greatly assisted by enhanced intelligence capabilities, the use of new and innovative technologies, effective criminal investigations, the strengthening of long-term law enforcement relationships, and physical security measures. Counter-terrorism is an intelligence-led discipline, but its reach remains limited, by legal limitations, by technology and geography, and by the scarcity of human intelligence. Since September 11, intelligence capabilities have been greatly enhanced in size and reach. This has significantly enhanced pre-emption and prevention. Surveillance technologies, including the increased use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) has had a significant effect on the AQ core and on other high value targets, including in Yemen and Somalia. The use of other new technologies, including fusing information derived from biometrics, forensics, mobile phone tracking, and information from computer hard drives with more conventional human intelligence are potential multipliers.

Effective criminal investigation, prosecution and conviction in Indonesia, Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom and elsewhere have been important in building public understanding and support for robust government action. Building long-term law enforcement relationships, within and between countries has contributed to the success in prosecutions, including through undermining silos and mistrust. The Joint Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) in Indonesia has proven to be a good model for building relationships and capabilities. The

works of the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) in Kuala Lumpur, and the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok (ILEA), have also built regional networks and skills. Physical security measures and measures to protect critical infrastructure and the integrity of identity have undoubtedly also reduced points of vulnerability, strengthened law enforcement, and acted as a deterrent.

While counter-terrorism capabilities have significantly improved, government efforts to establish effective counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation programmes have perhaps been less successful. Counter-radicalisation is a developing discipline of as yet uncertain impact. The attenuation of contributing social conditions in vulnerable communities, including marginalisation, alienation, poverty, unemployment, lack of access to modern education – has a long way to go. Deprivation cannot justify terrorism, but it fosters grievance and recruitment and can play to the AQ narrative. Counter-terrorism policies need to blend tough law enforcement or military action with other instruments of state power such as development assistance, and law enforcement, access to justice and social support mechanisms.

Australian assistance to international counter-radicalisation efforts has focussed on assisting community groups in building community resilience, conflict resolution, and promoting inter-faith dialogue. Our approach is to work with credible local leaders to support them in finding local solutions to local problems. Programmes of school-building and basic education have a secondary counter-radicalisation dimension, offering skills which enhance employment opportunities and connections with the community. Prison reform or prisoner rehabilitation is potentially an area where significant gains might be made. Like education, its impact would extend beyond counter-radicalisation and represent progress more broadly in development and governance.

De-radicalisation, or disengagement programmes for convicted terrorists, is an uncertain science, but a developing one. Recidivism is evident, but government efforts may assist in limiting spread of extremism through detention, and re-integration after release. Frustration and exhaustion with violence in communities affected by terrorist activity may be encouraging local leaders more robustly to challenge the terrorist narrative. Importantly, terrorism must be dealt with as a potent form of criminality, and not dignified by religious or political purpose.

Nine years after 9/11, and eight years after the first Bali bombing, significant gains have been made against the challenge from the new and potent forms of terrorism these attacks represented. But we are a long way from fully understanding the pathways to radicalisation and extremism, and research so far shows that these can indeed be diverse and highly

individualised. Our intelligence and law enforcement capabilities and international collaboration, too, have contributed to counter-terrorism successes. But the challenges ahead suggest that transnational terrorism will remain a first order security issue for governments for a least a generation.



# THE PROBLEM WITH CYBER TERRORISM<sup>1</sup>

*Elina Noor*

## ABSTRACT

*The alarm of cyber terrorism has been raised for more than a decade and yet the world has still not witnessed any crippling effects of a so-called “logic bomb” to date. Cyber terrorism holds promise as a cheaper option to physical terrorism and offers the veil of anonymity and maximum destruction to its perpetrator(s). As technical knowledge and expertise advance, cyber attacks continue to rise, and terrorists increasingly demonstrate a keenness to engage in cyberspace, the barriers to cyber terror will eventually be significantly lowered. While the risk of cyber terrorism is not at present imminent, its execution in conjunction with a well-planned physical act of terror is a serious potential threat that should not be ignored.*

*Keywords: Cyber terrorism; terrorism; critical infrastructure*

## *Introduction*

As rush hour hits another weekday in City X and businesses begin trading, a worm commanded to infect and incapacitate the electricity grid of City X is released from halfway across the world. Blackout. Minutes later, as the city reels in puzzlement and back-up generators are fired up, five explosions simultaneously rock the financial district, a major hospital, a mass transit station, a cell phone tower, and a five-star hotel. Communication lines stutter and emergency services scramble. Carnage and chaos ensue.

It would be tempting to dismiss the above scenario as hyperbole. There have, after all, been no deaths directly caused by terrorists manipulating computer networks nor have there, so far, been any critical infrastructure meltdowns paralysing whole communities due to malware infection. Yet, as the 2010 Stuxnet target-specific worm and the 2000

---

<sup>1</sup> The views expressed herein are personal to the author.

<sup>2</sup> Stuxnet infects Windows systems in searching for industrial control systems. It has targeted critical infrastructure, notably infecting computers at the Bushehr power plant in Iran. Stuxnet’s infection rate has been highest in Iran at 58.8 per cent followed by 18.2 per cent in Indonesia, 8.3 per cent in India, 2.6 per cent in Azerbaijan and 1.6 per cent in the United States.

hacking of a waste management control system in Australia have shown,<sup>3</sup> a pseudo-apocalyptic consequence of a cyber attack may not completely be out of the question in the near future.

This article will consider the prospect of cyber terrorism in light of its many ambiguities. It will firstly parse the various references to the term “cyber terrorism” and argue that shorthand equations of it to terrorists’ use of computers or networks to plan, organise, and coordinate physical acts of terrorism are misleading and erroneous. Secondly, this article will discuss why cyber terrorism would even be an option, specifically considering cost, anonymity, and target and effect maximisation as influencing factors of decision. Thirdly, this article will assess the charge that cyber terrorism is an exaggerated threat, particularly given security measures surrounding Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition Systems (SCADA) systems. Fourthly, this article will discuss the likely perpetrators of cyber terrorism before concluding with a brief outlook of the threat of cyber terrorism in the future. This article will not consider preventive measures against cyber terrorism or engage in a discussion of legal measures that are or should be available to combat a threat and/or actual act of cyber terrorism.

### *Defining the Boundaries of Cyber Terrorism*

Given the lack of a universal accord on the definition of terrorism despite the decades, perhaps even centuries, of recorded acts of terrorism, it is unsurprising that there has been just as much irresolution surrounding cyber terrorism as a newer sub-phenomenon. If terrorism can generally be accepted to be the means through which the use of force is carried out to intimidate or cause fear and to elicit a political or ideological change, then cyber terrorism marks the convergence of cyber space and terrorism (Denning, 2000). An actual use of force executed through and against information or computer systems and networks resulting in fear, violence and physical destruction of property or persons to coerce a political or ideological change would therefore qualify as an act of cyber terrorism.

Cyber terrorism should not be confused with the use of the Internet by parties communicating, coordinating, or plotting physical acts of terrorism to bring about political or ideological change. It is not networked groups of individuals transferring funds across borders to

---

<sup>3</sup> In 2000, Vitek Boden, hacked into the computerised waste management system of Maroochy Shire Council, Queensland, Australia releasing millions of litres of raw sewage into local parks, rivers and the grounds of a hotel. At the time, he was an employee of the company which had installed the system and had had his job application to the Council rejected.

finance physical acts of terrorism. Nor is it the spread of propaganda to threaten, encourage or launch mass destruction in the name of an ideological belief.

In the same manner that chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons provide a tactical means of delivering terror, cyber space affords the terrorist yet another delivery system for real world devastation. Cyber terrorism offers the projection of an unparalleled dimension in which the virtual and physical realms can collide in damaging proportions and through which no cross-border laws have yet adequately transcend. It represents an extension of the *tactic* of terrorism driven to manipulate change through the threat or use of violence. It is precisely because of this that cyber terrorism is to be treated as a crime, not an act of war, and like terrorism in general is to be combated through legal rather than military means.

Crucially, cyber terrorism distinguishes itself from a “regular” (cyber) crime in that it is not motivated by a desire to effect political or ideological change. Thus a disgruntled former employee’s disabling of a company’s alert network to incapacitate response in an emergency as happened to Chevron in 1992, while serious, inconvenient, and criminal would not count as cyber terrorism for lack of a political or ideological motive. On the other hand, the same act would be considered cyber terrorism if done by an individual with the criminal subjective element – or, *mens rea* – of causing widespread fear, panic and possibly destruction to pressure a change in a system of government.

### *The Appeal of Cyber Terrorism*

The value of cyber terrorism lies in its premise that it is relatively cheap; that it offers the perpetrator(s) anonymity; and that with a certain level of skill, high value targets could be crashed, affecting large masses of people and generating a substantial amount of publicity. Each of these claims will be assessed.

*Cost.* In 1999, a virus named for a Miami stripper, Melissa, exploited the power of social engineering and mass mailed itself to the first 50 addresses in a user’s Microsoft Outlook address book. Although more of an inconvenience rather than a security threat, it resulted in more than \$80 million in damage to North American businesses and provided the blueprint for subsequent mass email worms including The Love Bug, Anna Kournikova, and MyDoom (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002). A year later, a similar self-propagating but far more destructive virus, ILOVEYOU, shut down email for millions of computers worldwide in a



matter of hours and cost businesses between \$6 and \$10 billion in estimated damages. This eclipsed the \$12.1 billion total cost for all computer viruses in 1999 (Kirschner, 2000).

While huge financial damages were amassed from both these viruses, their scripts were written by lone individuals for a negligible amount. The ILOVEYOU virus, for example, bore distinct similarities to its author's rejected proposed college thesis (BBC News, 2000) and did not require any structured fund-raising for its creation or release. In fact, individuals motivated by either one or a combination of ego, thrill, revenge, greed have long been hacking systems at relatively minimal financial cost. Contrast, for example, the cost of setting up and maintaining an Internet connection to the alleged US\$74,000 transferred for the purchase of three tonnes of explosives used in the 2002 Bali bombing (Fielding, Campbell, and Rufford, 2002). Or the roughly US\$100,000 spent on purchasing the rifles, electronic devices, and ammunition used by the Mumbai attackers in 2008, excluding payments made to each of the 10 terrorists (Nanjappa, 2008). Or the estimated US\$400,000 to US\$500,000 it took to execute the attacks against the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 as well as the expenses associated with the network of support it took to plan, train, and launch the attacks (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004).

Remote execution of a cyber attack renders it far cheaper than the travel and preparatory expenses inevitably incurred with physical acts of terror. With increasing nodes of Internet penetration through WiFi and mobile signals as well as faster connection speeds, cyber space also provides the flexibility and mobility in deployment of attacks or perpetrators that physical terrorism cannot necessarily compete with. Additionally, the proliferation of malware-and botnets-for-sale, and hacker-for-hire rings as burgeoning businesses on the Internet as well as the many hacking tools available for free or cheap download make cyber attacks an increasingly cost-effective option for contemplation. For \$150, neophytes can be self-taught in hacking through an online purchase of various hacking modules. Tutors are also available via instant messaging and interactive tutorials (Lee and Hornby, 2010).

Yet the estimated \$3 million building cost of the target-specific Stuxnet worm shows that not all cyber attacks come cheap (Hesseldahl, 2010; Schneier, 2010). The sophistication and size of Stuxnet and Conficker, which still remain active and infectious, lend belief that these malware were designed and tested for several months by a team of highly skilled programmers able to mask the worms' origin and as in the case of Conficker, trigger variant spawns to continually confound experts. As malware becomes increasingly complex, deceptive, and therefore costly,

the perception of cyber terrorism being a cheaper option than physical terrorism will need to be re-evaluated from time to time. As the case of the “underwear bomber” who, last year, tried to blow up an international flight to Detroit on Christmas Day demonstrates, the trend may be for terrorists to optimise maximum impact through smaller – and cheaper – scales of physical attacks.

*Anonymity.* The phenomenal growth of the Internet that saw only 16 million (0.4 per cent) of the world’s population connected in 1995 to nearly 2 billion (28.8 per cent) connected in the third quarter of 2010 coupled with gaping legal lacunae within and across jurisdictions to regulate conduct on the Internet have led to criticisms of the Internet as the wild, wild web (Internet World Stats, 2010; ITU, 2010).

The protection of privacy – and by implication, anonymity – on the Internet has its champions. However, unlike in the real world where geographical borders are monitored and enforced through customs, immigration, and patrols, the virtual world has no comparable equivalent, thus, making identification, verification, and attribution a challenge. That difficulty is only compounded by the sheer size and traffic of information that flows through the networks. As with any double-edged sword, anonymity on the Internet provides a user not only the luxury – but some would say, the right – to free speech and a measure of privacy but it also facilitates service disruption, site vandalism, and data theft, among others and masks the offender(s) by various means available, such as by hiding or changing an IP address. For the publicity-shy terrorist, Internet anonymity provides a perfect cover for identity without masking the results of a cyber terror attack.

*Target and effect maximisation.* In October 2010, Symantec released a report of its survey of 1,580 private businesses in six critical infrastructure industries from 15 countries worldwide. The six industries were energy, banking and finance, communications, information technology, healthcare, and emergency services. More than half (53 per cent) of businesses surveyed said they “suspected or were pretty sure they had experienced an attack waged with a specific political goal in mind” with three in five respondents convinced that the attacks were “somewhat to extremely effective” (Symantec, 2010). Banking and finance topped the list and expected to continue being hit by politically-minded attacks in the future. Energy industry respondents reported they were best prepared for such attacks.

This accords with a January 2010 McAfee and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies report identifying the oil and gas sector as a priority target for cyber attacks. The sector reported more Ghostnet-

style infiltration,<sup>4</sup> more large-scale DDOS attacks, more extortion attacks, and more theft of service attacks than any other sector. Attackers were also more likely to target the sector's SCADA system than for financial information in other sectors (Baker & Waterman, 2010).

The vulnerability of critical infrastructure industries as a collective target lies in the industries' function as public sector service providers and the backbone of a nation's economy. Unlike military installations, they straddle the public and the private spheres making them especially valuable, strategic targets. As shown in the opening example, assuming inadequate back-up measures, a blow on the energy or emergency services industry by disabling its network could have the very real, chilling, and public effect of bringing a nation to its knees. A mass and subtly-executed shutdown of critical infrastructure would provide optimum visibility, propaganda, and glory at minimum cost to the terrorist and maximum cost to society.

### *An exaggerated threat?*

By its very nature, terrorism provokes anxiety, fear, desperation, maybe even paranoia. Technology, because of its novelty and dynamism, inspires a milder sense of incertitude, apprehension, maybe even concern about its reach to those unfamiliar with it. As cyber terrorism merges these two formidable spheres, the charge is that it creates an alarmist policy reaction because people – in this case, policy-makers and government officials – fear what they do not understand (Green, 2002).

While sceptics maintain that cyber terrorism's barriers to entry remain ridiculously high,<sup>5</sup> the constant dread that looms large in the minds of those concerned is the vulnerability – real or perceived – of key installations such as nuclear power plants, military and intelligence infrastructure, utility grids, as well as air traffic control and other SCADA systems. In theory and to a large extent, in practice, many of these systems

---

<sup>4</sup> Ghostnet refers to a 10-month investigation by the Information Warfare Monitor into alleged Chinese cyber espionage against Tibetan institutions. The study revealed a network of over 1,295 infected hosts in 103 countries. For more, see Information Warfare Monitor. (2009, March 29). Tracking *Ghostnet*: Investigating a Cyber Espionage Network. JR02-2009. Retrieved from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/13731776/Tracking-GhostNet-Investigating-a-Cyber-Espionage-Network>.

<sup>5</sup> For example, a 2002 article debunking the cyber terror threat to water utilities, in general, and the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA), in particular, asserts that three hacks into very narrow access points would need to be committed before the MWRA's IT and SCADA systems could be corrupted and threatened (Berinato, 2002).

especially the most sensitive ones are air-gapped. This means they are secured and kept separate from other local networks or the Internet and operate on specially-designed software for their unique purposes. The implied conclusion from air-gapping is that these systems are safe from, and invincible to, computer network attacks. In the case of the US nuclear weapons system, extra layers of security such as “permissive action links” or codes are required to be separately inputted by the president (Green, 2002).

In truth, however, air-gapping can be breached through numerous uncontrolled interconnects, the use of mass storage devices, or roaming notebooks. In 2006, Internet Security Systems researchers detailed how back-end networks controlling power, oil and gas, manufacturing, water, and transportation systems have “no security”. They found that in most cases, the systems themselves did not support authentication, encryption, or even the most basic validation protocols. The few systems that did have these protocols usually ran with security features disabled. Thus, all that was required to gain access to controlled networks that appeared to be secure were “average” hacking skills (Maynor and Graham, 2006).

Moreover, air-gapping SCADA systems do not always make cost-effective business sense particularly in profit-generating critical infrastructure industries. To air-gap SCADA systems would foster huge inefficiencies for a supply chain that depends on a seamless flow of information. It would also prove costly due to the development of specialised software it would require. Furthermore, data generated through SCADA systems can provide invaluable information for real-time business analysis and be fed to other systems outside the SCADA realm (Schneier, 2010).

It also bears reminder that while air-gapping protects against leaked data, it is not impervious to infection. System updates that are performed using CDs or USB sticks may be a vector of infection on even air-gapped SCADA systems. Stuxnet relied on a USB mass storage device as just such a vector.

It is worth pausing here to consider (i) the advanced nature of Stuxnet and (ii) how, despite its complexity, it overcame perimeter defences through a simple and single USB stick on a host computer in Iran before going on to infect approximately 45,000 computers around the world. Stuxnet takes advantage of four zero-day vulnerabilities. This, according to experts, is itself remarkable given that threat using one zero-day vulnerability is already “quite an event” (O’Murchu, 2010). Stuxnet uses two different stolen but valid digital certificates, contains dozens of encrypted code blocks, hides itself, uses peer-to-peer capabilities for remote command and control, and alters its behaviour based on the

systems it infects (Sverdlove, 2010). Stuxnet was written using multiple languages, is notable for its complexity *and* stability, and utilises detailed knowledge of anti-virus technologies and their vulnerabilities (Kaplan, 2010). Significantly, unlike Melissa, ILOVEYOU, or Conficker, Stuxnet specifically targets industrial control systems.

For all its impressive attributes, however, Stuxnet's initial infection was delivered directly to an end point simply by plugging in a compromised USB device. It was also the end point of a US military laptop at a Middle East base that proved to be the Department of Defense's Achilles' heel in a 2008 malware attack delivered by an infected USB stick. That infection which spread through US Central Command's classified and unclassified network systems took 14 months to clean up under Operation Buckshot Yankee (Shachtman, 2010; Lynn III, 2010).

### *Perpetrator(s)*

If, therefore, even secure and air-gapped networks can be penetrated for infection as a preliminary step towards cyber terrorism, the question arises as to the type(s) of perpetrators such an act would draw. In 1999, the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Irregular Warfare at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California analysed the "demand" for cyber terror capability by terrorist groups based on their goals, ideology, and psychology. The study considered five terrorist group types: religious, New Age, ethno-nationalist separatist, revolutionary, and far-right extremist and concluded that of the five, only religious groups were likely to seek the most damaging capability level consistent with their propensity for indiscriminate violence. The most immediate threat, however, came from New Age or single-issue terrorist groups although they were most likely to accept disruption as a substitute for destruction. Both groups had, by far, the best match in desire, ideology and environment to support a near term "advanced-structured" attack threat. In other words, they possessed the capability to conduct sophisticated attacks against multiple systems or networks (Arquilla & Tucker, 1999).

The 1999 report is for its detailed framework on cyber terrorism. Developments since then – and instructive particularly since the 11 September attacks – have appeared to confirm the study's conclusion regarding religious groups. In January 2002, the U.S. National Infrastructure Protection System (NIPC) reported interest by al-Qaeda members in SCADA systems, specifically seeking information on "water supply and wastewater management practices in the U.S. and abroad" (NIPC, 2002). A few months later, Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad,

radical cleric and founder of the now disbanded London-based group Jama'at Al-Muhajirun, warned of "attacks on the stock market" in "a matter of time", stating that Osama bin Laden himself had propagated the use of technology to "destroy the economy of the capitalist states" (Verton, 2002).

In 2000, the Centre followed up in a second report by suggesting that terrorists have not yet integrated IT into their overall strategy and that the psychological and organisational ill-conformity of hackers to cyber terrorism make an alliance with terrorists unlikely (Weimann, 2004; Conway, 2003). However, two developments call into question the strict veracity of this a decade on. First, since March 2000 there has been the very real possibility of terrorists infiltrating government systems as evidenced by Aum Shirinkyo's supply of software to Japan's Metropolitan Police Department's system to track classified police vehicle data. This, coupled with documented interest and agitation for cyber attacks against several Western governments by groups or individuals affiliated with al-Qaeda over the years, hint at a more comprehensive strategy including the use of IT of terror by these groups (Denning, 2007). Second, the proposition assumes that terrorists are non-state actors without the financial wherewithal of governments. Finally, while experts are doubtful of the rise of an unholy alliance between professional e-mercenaries and terrorists because of the closed nature distinctive of many modern terrorist groups, the possibility is not altogether to be precluded particularly if there is a convergence of interests and timing. In 2002, the US Central Intelligence Agency, in fact, revised its assessment of al-Qaeda's interest in cyber terrorism and asserted that the group had contemplated the use of hackers for hire to accelerate its capabilities acquisition. This contrasted its judgment of the group only a year earlier as posing "only a limited cyber-threat" (Gellman, 2002).

### *Conclusion: Future trends*

Currently, while the threat of cyber terrorism is still secondary to that of physical terrorism, it is real and extant. It holds specific appeal if executed ancillary to, and in combination with, physical resources in order to extract maximum amplification of a devastating one-two blow. And while a city-wide blackout may not be as visually searing as body parts exploding into pieces of blood and gore, the uptrend in actual cyber attacks suggests that the scale and complexity of the digital option may only escalate. The threat landscape, for example, evinces significant growth in both the volume and sophistication of cyber crime attacks, with malicious

code appearing more rampant than ever.<sup>6</sup>

Notwithstanding its outstanding conceptual ambiguities, cyber terrorism as a not-too-distant possibility should be taken seriously. It is submitted that as terrorists bide their time to build, advance, and improve their capabilities, the prospect of a cyber terror attack also lies in wait. It would seem folly to deny, dismiss, or ignore it as societies become increasingly networked and whole economies and nations grow more reliant on technology. To do so would only invite regret.

### *References*

- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010, October 19). ITU estimates two billion people online by end 2010. *ITU Press Release*. Retrieved from [http://www.itu.int/net/pressoffice/press\\_releases/2010/39.aspx](http://www.itu.int/net/pressoffice/press_releases/2010/39.aspx).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010, October). Symantec 2010 Critical Infrastructure Protection Study: Global Results. Symantec. Retrieved from [http://www.symantec.com/content/en/us/about/presskits/Symantec\\_2010\\_CIP\\_Study\\_Global\\_Data.pdf](http://www.symantec.com/content/en/us/about/presskits/Symantec_2010_CIP_Study_Global_Data.pdf).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010, April). Symantec Global Internet Security Threat Report: Trends for 2009. *XV*. Symantec. Retrieved from [http://eval.symantec.com/mktginfo/enterprise/white\\_papers/b-whitepaper\\_internet\\_security\\_threat\\_report\\_xv\\_04-2010.en-us.pdf](http://eval.symantec.com/mktginfo/enterprise/white_papers/b-whitepaper_internet_security_threat_report_xv_04-2010.en-us.pdf).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2010). Internet Growth Statistics. *Internet World Stats*. Retrieved from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/emarketing.htm>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2004, August 21). National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2000, September 26). Suspected creator of “ILOVEYOU” virus chats online. *CNN online chat transcript*. Retrieved from <http://archives.cnn.com/2000/TECH/computing/09/26/guzman.chat/>.

---

<sup>6</sup> The security firm, Symantec, recorded more than 240 million distinct new malicious programmes in 2009 representing a 100 per cent increase from 2008 (Symantec, 2010).

- \_\_\_\_\_. (2000, May 10). Love Bug Revenge Theory. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/743082.stm>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2000, May 10). Melissa Virus Creator Jailed. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1963371.stm>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1999, December 19). Melissa Virus Creator Pleads Guilty. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/557605.stm>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1999, December 9). Creator of “Melissa” Computer Virus Pleads Guilty to State and Federal Charges. *U.S. Department of Justice Press Release*. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/cybercrime/melissa.htm>.
- Baker, S. and Waterman, S. (2010, January 28). In the Crossfire: Critical Infrastructure in the Age of Cyber War. McAfee and Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Retrieved from [http://csis.org/files/attachments/100128\\_mcafee\\_CSIS.pdf](http://csis.org/files/attachments/100128_mcafee_CSIS.pdf).
- Berinato, S. (2002, March 15). Cybersecurity – The Truth about Cyberterrorism. *CIO*. Retrieved from [http://www.cio.com/article/30933/CYBERSECURITY\\_The\\_Truth\\_About\\_Cyberterrorism](http://www.cio.com/article/30933/CYBERSECURITY_The_Truth_About_Cyberterrorism).
- Conway, M. (2003). Hackers as Terrorists? Why it doesn’t Compute. *Computer Fraud and Security*, 12, 10-13.
- Denning, D. E. (2007). A View of Cyberterrorism Five Years Later. In Himma, K. (ed.), *Internet Security: Hacking, Counterhacking, and Society*. Boston: Jones and Bartlett.
- Denning, D. E. (2000, May 23). *Cyberterrorism. Testimony before the Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives*. Retrieved from <http://www.cs.georgetown.edu/~denning/infosec/cyberterror.html>.
- Fielding, N., Campbell, M., Rufford, N. (2002, October 20). Bin Laden paid for Bali bombing. *The Sunday Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article815606.ece>.



- Frauenheim, E. (2002, December 12). IDC: Cyberterror and other prophecies. *CNET News*. Retrieved from [http://news.cnet.com/2100-1001-977780.html?tag=fd\\_top](http://news.cnet.com/2100-1001-977780.html?tag=fd_top).
- Gellman, B. (2002, June 27). Cyber-Attacks by Al Qaeda Feared. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/12/AR2006061200711.html>.
- Green, J. (2002, November). The Myth of Cyberterrorism. *Washington Monthly*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0211.green.html>.
- Hesseldahl, A. (2010, September 25). Computer Worm May Be Targeting Iranian Nuclear Sites. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-09-24/stuxnet-computer-worm-may-be-aimed-at-iran-nuclear-sites-researcher-says.html>.
- Kaplan, D. (2010, September 14). Microsoft fixes another Stuxnet-related bug, 10 others. *SC Magazine US*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmagazineus.com/microsoft-fixes-another-stuxnet-related-bug-10-others/article/178903/>.
- Kirschner, S.K. (2000, July). I Love You...Not. *Popular Science*. 48-49.
- Lee, M., Hornby, L. (2010, January 20). Google attack puts spotlight on China's "red" hackers. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE60J20820100120>.
- Lynn III, William J. (2010, September/October). Defending a New Domain: The Pentagon's Cyberstrategy. *Foreign Affairs*. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66552/william-j-lynn-iii/defending-a-new-domain>.
- Maynor, D., Graham, R. (2006). Scada Security and Terrorism: We're Not Crying Wolf! Blackhat Federal 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.blackhat.com/presentations/bh-federal-06/BH-Fed-06-Maynor-Graham-up.pdf>.

- Nanjappa, V. (2008, December 26). Mumbai attacks cost Lashkar Rs 4 crore. *Rediff.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.hvk.org/articles/1208/344.html>.
- National Infrastructure Protection Centre. (2002, January 30). Terrorist Interest in Water Supply and SCADA Systems. *Information Bulletin 01-001*.
- O'Murchu, L. (2010, September 14). Stuxnet Using Three Additional Zero-Day Vulnerabilities. *Symantec Connect*. Retrieved from <http://www.symantec.com/connect/blogs/stuxnet-using-three-additional-zero-day-vulnerabilities>.
- Schneier, B. (2010, July 23). Internet worm targets SCADA. *Schneier on Security*. Retrieved from [http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2010/07/internet\\_worm\\_t.html](http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2010/07/internet_worm_t.html).
- Schneier, B. (2010, October 7). Stuxnet. *Schneier on Security*. Retrieved from <http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2010/10/stuxnet.html>.
- Shachtman, N. (2010, August 25). Insiders Doubt 2008 Pentagon Hack Was Foreign Spy Attack (Updated). *Wired*. Retrieved from <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/08/insiders-doubt-2008-pentagon-hack-was-foreign-spy-attack/#more-29819#ixzz12ldznc5>.
- Sverdlove, H. (2010, October 18). Stuxnet worm shows critical infrastructure attacks no longer just Hollywood hype. *SC Magazine US*. Retrieved from <http://www.scmagazineus.com/stuxnet-worm-shows-critical-infrastructure-attacks-no-longer-just-hollywood-hype/article/181212/>.
- Verton, D. (2002, November 18). Bin Laden Cohort Warns of Cyberattacks. *Computerworld*. Retrieved from [http://www.pcworld.com/article/107052/bin\\_laden\\_cohort\\_warns\\_of\\_cyberattacks.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/107052/bin_laden_cohort_warns_of_cyberattacks.html).



# ***COUNTERING AL-QAEDA AS A “STATE OF MIND”<sup>1</sup>***

*Kumar Ramakrishna*

## ***ABSTRACT***

*This article suggests that the ideological struggle is where the centre of gravity of the evolving Al-Qaeda transnational terrorist threat lies. The supporters of “Al-Qaedaism” or Salafi-Jihadism worldwide are nowadays largely inspired but not necessarily directed by Al-Qaeda’s embattled central leadership. The New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd has also talked of how Al-Qaeda has evolved from a discrete organisational network into a more amorphous ideological “State of Mind”. It is argued that especially in Southeast Asia, the successful violent radicalisation of an individual often involves interaction between the cultural dimensions of collectivism, large power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance; effective ideological indoctrination – either online or in the real world – by charismatic, skilled Al-Qaedaist ideologues such as Anwar Al-Awlaki; and an appropriate psychological predisposition on the part of the individual, generated by conducive background, trigger and opportunity factors. Three broad options for countering Al-Qaeda as a “State of Mind” are: first, developing the capacity to identify “early warning indicators” of violent radicalisation; second, building the capability to undercut Al-Qaedaism; and finally promoting critical thinking in the wider population, particularly amongst young people within collectivist, large power-distance and ambiguity-intolerant cultural systems.*

### *The Strategic Problem: Al-Qaeda as a “State of Mind”*

It has been suggested that violent religious extremist ideology<sup>2</sup> is the key to understanding the threat of terrorist networks like Al-Qaeda and

---

<sup>1</sup> By Kumar Ramakrishna, Associate Professor, and Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The views expressed herein are personal to the author and do not reflect any institutional position.

<sup>2</sup> By “ideology” we follow C.J.M. Drake, who defines the term as those “beliefs, values, principles and objectives” by which a group defines itself and justifies its course of action”. See C.J.M. Drake cited in Jeffrey B. Cozzens, “Identifying Entry Points of action in Counter-Radicalisation: Countering Salafi-Jihadi Ideology through Development Initiatives – Strategic Openings”, Working Paper 2006/6 (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2006), p. 1.

Jemaah Islamiyah. For instance a recent report by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy argues that “tactical efforts to thwart attacks” by terrorist cells needs to be supplemented by “strategic efforts to counter the extremist radicalisation” that fuels the “hatred and violence” animating them.<sup>3</sup> Stephen Ulph of the respected Jamestown Foundation concurs, opining that “the ideological struggle is where the centre of gravity for the jihad lies”.<sup>4</sup> In fact in a 2005 online posting tellingly entitled “The Al-Qaeda Organisation is now Finished”, a jihadist sympathiser pours scorn on the intelligence and security services of the international community, pointing out that they:

are still fixated on fighting individuals, oblivious to the fact that they are in reality fighting an idea, one that has spread across the globe like fire and which is embraced even by those whose faith is a mustard seed.<sup>5</sup>

In like vein, the chief reporter for the United Kingdom’s *Observer* newspaper, Jason Burke, has argued that the Al-Qaeda “worldview” or what he calls “al-Qaedaism”, is in fact “growing stronger everyday”, fuelled by “anti-Western, anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic rhetoric”. Burke points out that the supporters of Al-Qaedaism worldwide are largely inspired but not necessarily directed by Al-Qaeda’s embattled central leadership.<sup>6</sup> The *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd has also talked of how eliminating Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden has ceased to be strategically decisive – because Al-Qaeda “has become a state of

---

<sup>3</sup> J. Scott Carpenter, Matthew Levitt, Steven Simon, and Juan Zarate, *Fighting the Ideological Battle: The Missing Link in US Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism* (Washington D.C: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2010), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Ulph, Testimony to the Open Hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 24 May 2007. Ulph is Senior Fellow, The Jamestown Foundation and Research Associate, Combating Terrorism Centre, US Military Academy, West Point, USA. Available online:

[http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:ckYYmIffBmkJ:intelligence.senate.gov/hearings.cfm%3Fhearingid%3D2811%26witnessId%3D6519+jihadist+ideology,+centre+of+gravity&hl=en&gl=sg&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEEsjs1d9qgoCvX8SMRWZa81VYQt6Og-kvF7s2P6H5gHF6nXCziZ2Dvoug9uoAYuu-cpeLfJiHCq1feY9Ireph3L\\_61BRtBcArE4aSuwdWFwuZuyYKije9D1LarO703uNV9jG5fZ\\_6&sig=AHIEtBR4tZlxixZwGQxN-xZ69idaGGijqw](http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:ckYYmIffBmkJ:intelligence.senate.gov/hearings.cfm%3Fhearingid%3D2811%26witnessId%3D6519+jihadist+ideology,+centre+of+gravity&hl=en&gl=sg&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEEsjs1d9qgoCvX8SMRWZa81VYQt6Og-kvF7s2P6H5gHF6nXCziZ2Dvoug9uoAYuu-cpeLfJiHCq1feY9Ireph3L_61BRtBcArE4aSuwdWFwuZuyYKije9D1LarO703uNV9jG5fZ_6&sig=AHIEtBR4tZlxixZwGQxN-xZ69idaGGijqw) (accessed 14 October 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> See Jason Burke, “Think Again: Al-Qaeda” *Foreign Policy*, 1 May 2004. Available online: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2004/05/01/think\\_again\\_al\\_qaeda](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2004/05/01/think_again_al_qaeda) (accessed 14 October 2010).

mind”.<sup>7</sup> For his part, Ulph is eloquent and persuasive in pointing out the insidious potential of Al-Qaeda’s Salafi-Jihadist<sup>8</sup> ideology to violently radicalise vulnerable Muslim communities everywhere. In fact, careful study of this “curriculum for jihad” uncovers the essential message and methodology of Salafi-Jihadism or Al-Qaedaism – and how its proponents either online or in the real world:

attract the uncommitted broad armchair sympathiser, detach him from his social and intellectual environment, undermine his self-image hitherto as an observant Muslim, introduce what the ideologues claim is ‘real Islam’, re-script history in terms of a perennial conflict, centralise jihad as his Islamic identity, train him not only militarily but also socially and psychologically for jihad and doctrinally defend the behaviour of the mujahideen against criticism.<sup>9</sup>

There is much evidence to support Ulph’s cogent assertion in recent times. Thanks to the Internet, jihadist ideologues such as the charismatic Al-Qaeda leader Anwar Al-Awlaki have been able to violently radicalise individuals worldwide. One such individual was Major Nidal Hasan, the United States army psychiatrist who perpetrated the Fort Hood shooting incident in Texas in November 2009, which resulted in the deaths of 13 US soldiers. Awlaki also admitted that he personally guided the failed underwear bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who tried to bring down an American commercial aircraft en route from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day 2009. Awlaki has even been linked to the Al-Qaeda hijackers who undertook the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.<sup>10</sup> Awlaki’s own clarion call for unwavering attacks against civilians, hints at why in 2010 he became the first US citizen to be put on a

---

<sup>7</sup> Maureen Dowd, “Spinning Our Safety”, *The New York Times*, 25 July 2004. Available online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/25/opinion/25dowd.html> (accessed 14 October 2010).

<sup>8</sup> In this essay Al-Qaedaism and Salafi-Jihadism will be taken to refer to the same ideological paradigm. For an expanded discussion of Salafi-Jihadist culture and ideology, see Cozzens, “Identifying Entry Points of Action”, p. 2, f/n 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ulph Testimony.

<sup>10</sup> Lisa M. Allen, “Al-Awlaki’s Message to Muslims”, *Foreign Policy Blogs*, 26 May 2010. Available online: <http://terrorism.foreignpolicyblogs.com/2010/05/26/al-awlakis-message-to-muslims/> (accessed 14 October 2010).

list of militants approved by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for targeted assassination:<sup>11</sup>

A combatant is someone who bears arms – even if this is a woman. Non-combatants are people who do not take part in the war. *The American people in its entirety take part in the war, because they elected this administration, and they finance this war...* We should examine this issue from the perspective of Islamic law, and this settles the issue – is it permitted or forbidden? If the heroic mujahid brother Umar Farouk [Abdulmutallab] could have targeted hundreds of soldiers, that would have been wonderful. But we are talking about the realities of war (emphasis mine).

Worryingly, Awlaki’s appeal has even extended to Southeast Asia. In July 2010, Singaporeans were informed that a full-time national serviceman had been detained under the Internal Security Act, while two other Singaporeans were placed under Restriction Orders, all after being radicalised by Awlaki. The national serviceman, 20-year-old Muhammad Fadil Abdul Hamid, had evidently made direct online contact with the Yemen-based Awlaki. Fadil was attracted to global jihadi ideology and reportedly wanted to fight beside Awlaki in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. While Fadil is being detained for two years, two other Singaporeans – freelance religious teacher Muhammad Anwar Jailani, 44, and his student, Muhammad Thahir Shaik Dawood, 27 – were placed under Restriction Orders. It seemed that Awlaki, through CDs of his sermons, had also succeeded in radicalising both Jailani and Thahir.<sup>12</sup>

### *Deconstructing the Appeal of the Charismatic Radical Ideologue*

As the eminent terrorism scholar Walter Laqueur suggests, successful violent radicalisation requires both ideological “indoctrination” on the one hand and the appropriate “psychological predisposition” on the

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Kumar Ramakrishna, “Build Firewalls Against Extremism”, *The Straits Times*, 8 July 2010.

other.<sup>13</sup> In terms of the “ideological input” side, wider cultural factors often interact with the personal attributes of the Salafi-Jihadist ideologue to generate a potent ideological stimulus. In this connection, Olufemi A. Lawal, building upon the seminal work of the prominent Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede,<sup>14</sup> identifies a few dimensions of culture that can be used to analyse different societies, including power distance, uncertainty avoidance and individualism/collectivism.<sup>15</sup> Lawal points out that in large power-distance societies, “people accept as natural the fact that power and rewards are inequitably distributed in society”.<sup>16</sup> In collectivist societies, individuals are expected to be loyal to the group and subordinate personal goals to those of the collective. In an age of globalisation and the erosion of traditional social structures and processes, moreover, certain societies may feel particularly “threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity”.<sup>17</sup> It may thus be posited that individuals in large power-distance, ambiguity-intolerant and collectivist communities could well be “programmed”, so to speak, to be susceptible to the theological or for that matter ideological pronouncements of respected religious elders – because of the widespread notion that “power has been naturally concentrated in the hands of a leader”.<sup>18</sup> Culturally ambiguity-intolerant individuals would – at some subconscious level perhaps – seek a spiritual leader’s clear and unambiguous interpretations of wider social and political developments. Finally cultural collectivists would likely deem it their individual duty and proof of loyalty to the group to execute the spiritual leader’s edicts.<sup>19</sup>

In his essay, Lawal notes that, “non-Western and developing societies” tend to display large power-distance and collectivist

<sup>13</sup> Walter Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 95.

<sup>14</sup> See Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, *Cultures and Organisations: Software of the Mind* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> Olufemi A. Lawal, “Social-Psychological Considerations in the Emergence and Growth of Terrorism”, in *The Psychology of Terrorism, Vol. 4: Programs and Practices in Response and Prevention*, ed. by Chris E. Stout (London and Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), pp. 26-27. See also Kumar Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways: Understanding Muslim Radicalisation in Indonesia* (Westport and London: Praeger Security International, 2009), pp. 17-25.

<sup>16</sup> Lawal, “Social-Psychological Considerations”, in Stout, ed., *Psychology of Terrorism*, Vol. 4, p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. See also Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, pp. 24-5.

<sup>18</sup> Lawal, “Social-Psychological Considerations”, in Stout, ed., *Psychology of Terrorism*, Vol. 4, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.; Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, p. 23.



orientations.<sup>20</sup> This analysis appears to be borne out in the case of Southeast Asia. Barry Desker has drawn attention to the special status of Hadrami Arab migrants in Southeast Asia, who were regarded as “descendants of the Prophet” and “whose command of Arabic was perceived as giving them an insight into the religious texts”.<sup>21</sup> These Hadrami Arab migrants helped to introduce early Salafī elements into Southeast Asian Islam.<sup>22</sup> It should be noted in this respect that the families of the Jemaah Islamiyah founders, the late Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir have Hadrami Arab roots.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the most recent two decades or so of Islamic revival have resulted in the further Islamisation of state and identity along Middle Eastern lines. Hence Malaysian scholar Patricia Martinez observes that amongst many ordinary Southeast Asian Muslims today, a “core-periphery dynamic” exists, resulting in the tendency to be deferential to the Middle Eastern-trained and/or Arabic-speaking local *alim*:

The core-periphery dynamic, with the heartland of Islam as core and Southeast Asian Muslims as periphery, gives rise to an infantile religiosity among many ordinary Southeast Asian Muslims [who cannot] read the huge corpus of theology, philosophy, exegesis and jurisprudence that is the rich heritage of a Muslim [but] most of which are in Arabic.<sup>24</sup>

Martinez points out that as a result, many Southeast Asian Muslims “rely on the mediators of Islam those who are *ulama* – to interpret and guide”.<sup>25</sup> The power distance hypothesis is certainly relevant in Javanese culture. Many traditional *pesantren* – independent Islamic boarding schools – which are found in rural Java and in some cities, are

---

<sup>20</sup> Lawal, “Social-Psychological Considerations”, in Stout, ed., *Psychology of Terrorism*, Vol. 4, pp. 29-30.

<sup>21</sup> Barry Desker, “Countering Terrorism: Why the ‘War on Terror’ is Unending”, unpublished paper, September 2004.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* See also Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, pp. 56-60. In Islamic thought, the Salaf are seen as the original followers of the Prophet Mohammad. Their theological system is called “Salafī”.

<sup>23</sup> “Militant Islam in Indonesia”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 September 2003; Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, p. 87.

<sup>24</sup> Patricia A. Martinez, “Deconstructing Jihad: Southeast Asian Contexts”, in *After Bali: The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia*, ed. by Kumar Ramakrishna and See Seng Tan (Singapore: World Scientific/Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, 2003), pp. 73-74.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

usually run, in Tim Behrend’s view, as the “social and intellectual fiefdoms of charismatic *syekh*”; that is, “pilgrims who have returned to Java after an extended period of study in Mecca or Medinah”. Behrend observes that such “*syekh*” enjoy high status in Indonesian society. Indeed, they play a critical personal role in “constructing the religious psyche” of *pesantren* students. Such *pesantren* alumni form extensive social networks long after graduation and even play significant roles in the polity and society later.<sup>26</sup>

In short, the credibility of a high-profile Salafi-Jihadist ideologue of an appropriately high-status pedigree (such as for example, a Hadrami Arab in the Southeast Asian Muslim context) – could conceivably be that much stronger within a collectivist, large power-distance and strongly ambiguity-intolerant cultural milieu. Such credibility would be even further enhanced moreover if the ideologue in question had strong personal charisma, strong communication skills – and in an Internet age, technical familiarity with Web 2.0 tools. In this respect, it is no surprise that part of Anwar al-Awlaki’s appeal is the fact that he can speak excellent English and comes across as a charismatic individual – which may help explain the popularity of his sermons on YouTube. He apparently also has a Facebook page. His folksy sermons glorifying the war against the US and its allies were almost surely accessed by the Singaporean Fadil online. The same Awlaki sermons apparently motivated the freelance religious teacher Jailani to such an extent that he distributed CDs of them to his students and even members of the public. Furthermore, Jailani’s own student Tahir was moved to the point that he actually decided to fly to Yemen to seek deeper immersion in a jihadist milieu. Little wonder then that Awlaki has been called the ‘bin Laden of the Internet’. He seems to epitomise what some call “jihadist cool”.<sup>27</sup>

### *The Psychology of the Radicalised Individual*

Ideological indoctrination by skilled Al-Qaedaist propagandists like Anwar al-Awlaki – especially within wider cultural milieus characterised by collectivism, large power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance – represents part of the formula for understanding violent radicalisation. The other part concerns the “psychological predisposition”, as Laqueur puts it, on the part of the individual exposed to extremist ideas

---

<sup>26</sup> Tim Behrend, “Meeting Abubakar Ba’asyir”, 23 December 2002, available at <http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/asia/tbehrend/meet-abb.htm> (accessed 2003).

<sup>27</sup> Ramakrishna, “Build Firewalls against Extremism”.

whether online or in a small group. While no single, all-encompassing and fixed pathway toward violent radicalisation exists, in the view of Tomas Precht, there are generally three broad sets of causes of violent radicalisation: background, trigger, and opportunity factors.<sup>28</sup> Background factors include “those aspects of an individual’s history that make them susceptible” to violent radicalisation, such as an identity crisis in the face of the onslaught of Westernised globalisation, the experience of discrimination and perceived injustices – as well as immersion in a subculture of extremism.<sup>29</sup> Mohammed Bouyeri, the Dutch-Moroccan Salafi-Jihadist who murdered the controversial film-maker Theo van Gogh in broad daylight on an Amsterdam street in November 2004, was said to have become progressively alienated from a Dutch society whom he felt did not accept him. Bouyeri’s violent radicalisation was nurtured within a small group of like-minded extremists that Dutch intelligence later called the Hofstad Group.<sup>30</sup> The experience of childhood racism and social discrimination certainly was part of the life experience of the so-called twentieth hijacker in the 9/11 attacks, the French-Moroccan militant Zacarias Moussaoui. His brother Abd Samad recounts an incident that occurred when both he and Zacarias were children in Mulhouse, France. A white French child with whom the two brothers had been playing marbles for months suddenly refused to play with them any further. When the Moussaoui brothers sought the answer for the sudden change in behaviour, they were informed that the white child’s parents had said that the Moussaoui children were “niggers, and they don’t want me to play with niggers.”<sup>31</sup> A close study of Abd Samad Moussaoui’s book suggests that a key factor in Zacarias Moussaoui’s eventual violent radicalisation was precisely his struggle with racism and socio-economic discrimination.<sup>32</sup>

Trigger factors that tip a potential radical over the brink into full-blown violent radicalisation include, in Precht’s view, “Western foreign policy and provocative events, the presence of a charismatic leader or spiritual advisor, and the glorification of jihad”.<sup>33</sup> The senior JI operational leader, Riduan Isamuddin alias Hambali was very much angered by the so-

---

<sup>28</sup> Precht cited in Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Laura Grossman, *Homegrown Terrorists in the US and UK: An Empirical Examination of the Radicalization Process* (Washington DC: Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, 2009), p. 22.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> Abd Samad Moussaoui, with Florence Bouquillat, *Zacarias Moussaoui: The Making of a Terrorist*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman, *Homegrown Terrorists*.

called Tanjung Priok massacre in Jakarta in September 1984, in which Indonesian security forces cracked down hard on poor harbour workers protesting against dire working conditions, killing many of them. The so-called *Peristiwa Tanjung Priok* proved to be a significant trigger factor in Hambali’s violent radicalisation, as it was for other JI militants of his generation.<sup>34</sup> It turns out that the “spiritual advisor” who played a key role in constructing Hambali’s radicalised psyche, was the late JI founder Abdullah Sungkar, nicknamed “Ustad Wahhabi”, whose energetic, jihad-glorifying messages in the 1980s in Malaysia utterly captivated the younger man.<sup>35</sup> Precht considers “opportunity factors” as those “venues or locations” that “provide a setting for radicalisation by offering an opportunity to meet like-minded people, by giving inspiration or serving as a recruiting ground”.<sup>36</sup> In this respect, several commentators have noted how Pondok Pesantren Al-Mukmin in Ngruki village, central Surakarta, started by Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir in 1972, has acted in some ways as an “ideological space” for JI; a number of its graduates have gone on to become JI militants.<sup>37</sup>

### *Some Policy Implications*

Having unpacked the ways in which ideological stimuli could interact with particular cultural contexts as well as the psychological predispositions of individuals to produce violent radicalisation, it behoves us at this juncture to discuss practical implications of the challenge of countering “Al-Qaeda as a State of Mind”. It goes without saying that the first order of business is to recognise the role of good governance in ensuring sufficient political space for the articulation of, and the capacity to address, competing interests and grievances, as well as reducing poverty and economic disparities within societies – particularly those communities with a history of inter-group conflict. Political commitment to ensure that all faith groups residing within a polity do not have to endure widespread social and economic discrimination is particularly crucial.<sup>38</sup> However, it is

---

<sup>34</sup> Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, pp. 90, 121.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>36</sup> Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman, *Homegrown Terrorists*.

<sup>37</sup> For a detailed analysis of how this pesantren has functioned in the past as an ideological site for JI, see Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, pp. 94-104. For additional perspectives, see also Farish A. Noor, “Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta,” Working Paper 139 (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, October 1, 2007); Noor Huda Ismail, “Ngruki: It is a Terrorism School?” *Jakarta Post*, March 14–15, 2005.

<sup>38</sup> Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, p. 166.

worth reiterating the oft-forgotten point that “material inequality does not mean people automatically protest, let alone choose violence.”<sup>39</sup> Instead, violent extremism is more likely to occur precisely when wider structural factors are combined with *ideological mechanisms* designed to ensure that “various identities are truncated to one dimension which is then understood and presented as a fundamental clash of values, civilisations or belief systems”.<sup>40</sup> This is where the real danger of Internet ideologues such as Anwar Al-Awlaki lies and why the evolution of the Al-Qaeda threat into a virulent idea or “state of mind” is so insidious. What should be done then to counter this challenge? Three broad options appear to suggest themselves: first, developing the capacity to identify “early warning indicators” of violent radicalisation; second, building the capability to undercut and diminish the ideological appeal of Al-Qaedaism; and finally promoting critical thinking in the wider population, particularly amongst young people within collectivist, large power-distance and ambiguity-intolerant cultural systems.

First, it seems increasingly important – in an era of Internet-driven radicalisation of so-called “clean skin” individuals (that is, with no previous criminal record) – to develop greater sensitivity to the “early warning indicators” of religious extremism.<sup>41</sup> Self-radicalised, clean-skin individuals such as Major Nidal Hassan are harder to detect beforehand by security and intelligence agencies, as their contact with violent extremist ideologues, or terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda, are often not easily discernible. In addition, all too often their families, friends and colleagues failed to pay sufficient attention to “weak signals” of their gradual embrace of violent extremist worldviews – until too late.<sup>42</sup> Hence it is perhaps timely that analysts Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Laura Grossman, based on an in-depth study of 117 terrorists in the US and UK, have identified six common indicators of the process of “jihadist radicalisation” of such individuals: first, the adoption of a legalistic interpretation of Islam; second, trusting the interpretations of a “select and ideologically rigid set of religious authorities”; third, perceiving an “inherent schism between Islam and the West” to the point of feeling that

---

<sup>39</sup> *Civil Paths to Peace: Report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007), p. 36.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>41</sup> For an account of how one “clean skin” Singaporean with – perhaps counter-intuitively – a very good educational and economic background – was somehow radicalised by exposure to extremist teachings online, see Kumar Ramakrishna, “The Blind Path to Radicalisation: The Case of DIY Radical Abdul Basheer”, *The Straits Times*, 15 June 2007.

<sup>42</sup> “Troubling Portrait Emerges of Shooting Suspect: Walter Reed Training Director Said Hasan Required Extra Counseling”, *MSNBC.com*, 5 November 2009. Available online: [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33695256/ns/us\\_news-military/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33695256/ns/us_news-military/) (accessed 18 Oct. 2010).

both camps are “incapable of co-existence”; fourth, displaying a low tolerance of “perceived theological deviance”, at times even violently opposing such “alternative interpretations and practices”; fifth, attempting to impose their preferred religious interpretations on others; and finally and ultimately, political radicalisation to the point that they feel that the only proper response to the supposed Western conspiracy against Muslims is “military action”.<sup>43</sup>

Developing enhanced sensitivity to the early warning indicators of the internalisation of the Al-Qaeda state of mind aside, there is also a complementary need to undercut and diminish its appeal. This is where moderate and learned Muslim scholars have the key role in exposing the inherent theological errors of Al-Qaedaism. For instance, in Singapore, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), a statutory board formed in 1968, oversees the sermons in the 70 Singapore mosques serving Singapore’s half a million Muslims.<sup>44</sup> Amongst its various functions, MUIS runs the Asatizah Recognition Scheme “to enhance the standing” of Singapore’s Muslim religious teachers (*asatizah*) and “to serve as a reliable source of reference for the Singapore Muslim community”.<sup>45</sup> In this connection, it is noteworthy that MUIS was able to weed out the Awlaki-radicalised freelance religious teacher Jailani as a result of the Asatizah Recognition Scheme. If Jailani’s lack of formal credentials had not been discovered, Al-Qaedaism might have influenced many more Singaporeans.<sup>46</sup> MUIS aside, the respected moderate volunteer Muslim scholars of the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) have also taken a leading role in the fight against Al-Qaeda extremism. The RRG was formed quietly in April 2003 following the deeply unsettling discovery of the Singapore JI at the end of 2001. The RRG is spearheaded by two of Singapore’s leading independent Muslim scholars, Ustaz Haji Ali Haji Mohamed, Chairman of the Khadijah Mosque and Ustaz Haji Muhammad Hasbi Hassan, President of Pergas (Singapore Islamic Scholars and Religious Teachers Association). Between April 2004 and September 2006, the RRG conducted more than 500 counselling sessions with the JI detainees, and has since expanded its counselling sessions to the immediate families of JI detainees and the wider Singaporean Muslim community.<sup>47</sup> The RRG also runs a useful website.<sup>48</sup> It is worth noting that

---

<sup>43</sup> Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman, *Homegrown Terrorists*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>44</sup> See the MUIS website, available online at <http://www.muis.gov.sg/cms/aboutus/default.aspx> (accessed 18 October 2010).

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.muis.gov.sg/cms/services/Islamic.aspx?id=506>.

<sup>46</sup> Ramakrishna, “Build Firewalls against Extremism”.

<sup>47</sup> See Kumar Ramakrishna, “A Holistic Critique of Singapore’s Counter-Ideological Program”, *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 2, Issue 1 (Jan. 2009), pp. 8-11.

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.rrg.sg/main.asp> (accessed 18 October 2010).

while the moderate Muslim scholars take the lead in de-radicalisation efforts in Singapore, in Indonesia, a significant role in such efforts appears to be played by senior JI militants who have apparently turned against their former comrades, such as Nasir Abas and Ali Imron. It would appear that an optimal strategy for direct counter-ideological confrontation of the Al-Qaedaist worldview should involve a judicious mix of moderate Muslim scholars and carefully selected ex-radicals.<sup>49</sup>

Finally and most fundamentally, countering the appeal of Al-Qaedaism must require the promotion of the critical thinking faculties of citizens with respect to what they read, see and hear on the Internet or in the real world. It would after all be politically and morally repugnant, not to mention logistically and technically impossible, to police what individual citizens read, hear or see in either the virtual or real worlds. This is precisely why a recent study by the respected British think tank Demos argues that “rather than telling people what to think, it is better to teach them *how* to think”, by encouraging “young people to critically assess propaganda, lies and half-truths themselves”.<sup>50</sup> The Demos study, noting how the Internet “has become the primary source of information for the majority of young people in the UK today”, calls for enhanced “digital literacy” so as to enable young people to “recognise the difference between, for example, trustworthy sources of information and user-generated content”.<sup>51</sup> It would seem that such advice would be even more apposite for young people in the generally collectivist, large power-distance societies of Southeast Asia. In closing it is worth recollecting that the late Indonesian moderate Muslim scholar and former President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), in April 2002, had tellingly called for expanded liberal arts education for young Indonesian students, particularly those from the technical disciplines. His key point was that the critical thinking skills that a liberal arts education provides would enable Indonesian engineering and hard science university students to avoid “the more or less literalistic approach to the textual sources of Islam”, that is basically a natural outgrowth of “the same sort of simple modelling and formulistic thinking that they have learnt as students of engineering or other applied sciences”.<sup>52</sup> In Gus Dur’s learned view, it was essentially the uncritical, “formalistic understanding of Islamic law” that often breeds

---

<sup>49</sup> Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, pp. 174-9; Ramakrishna, “Holistic Critique”, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller, *The Power of Unreason: Conspiracy Theories, Extremism and Counter-Terrorism* (London: Demos, 2010), p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-9.

<sup>52</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid, “Best Way to Fight Islamic Extremism”, *Sunday Times*, 14 April 2002. See also Ramakrishna, *Radical Pathways*, pp. 201-202.



“violent radicalism”.<sup>53</sup> If the societies of Southeast Asia and beyond are to succeed in this long twilight struggle with the pernicious scourge of the Al-Qaeda state of mind, Gus Dur’s pithy but extremely sage advice can be ignored only to our collective peril.

### *References*

- Allen, Lisa M. (2010, 26 May). Al-Awlaki’s Message to Muslims. *Foreign Policy Blogs*. Available online: <http://terrorism.foreignpolicyblogs.com/2010/05/26/al-awlakis-message-to-muslims/> (accessed 14 October 2010).
- Bartlett, Jamie, and Carl Miller. (2010). *The Power of Unreason: Conspiracy Theories, Extremism and Counter-Terrorism*. London: Demos.
- Behrend, Tim. (2002, 23 December). *Meeting Abubakar Ba’asyir*. Available at <http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/asia/tbehrend/meet-abb.htm> (accessed 2003).
- The Blind Path to Radicalisation: The Case of DIY Radical Abdul Basheer. (2007, 15 June). *The Straits Times*.
- Build Firewalls against Extremism. (2010, 8 July). *The Straits Times*.
- Burke, Jason. (2004, 1 May). Think Again: Al Qaeda. *Foreign Policy*. Available online: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2004/05/01/think\\_again\\_al\\_qaeda](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2004/05/01/think_again_al_qaeda) (accessed 14 October 2010).
- Buruma, Ian. (2007). *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance*. London: Atlantic Books.
- Carpenter, J. Scott, Matthew Levitt, Steven Simon, and Juan Zarate. (2010). *Fighting the Ideological Battle: The Missing Link in US Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism*. Washington D.C: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

---

<sup>53</sup> Wahid, “Best Way to Fight Islamic Extremism”.



- Civil Paths to Peace: Report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding.* (2007). London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Cozzens, Jeffrey B. (2006). Identifying Entry Points of action in Counter-Radicalisation: Countering Salafi-Jihadi Ideology through Development Initiatives – Strategic Openings. Working Paper 2006/6. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Desker, Barry. (September 2004). Countering Terrorism: Why the ‘War on Terror’ is Unending. Unpublished paper.
- Dowd, Maureen. (2004, 25 July). Spinning Our Safety. *The New York Times*. Available online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/25/opinion/25dowd.html> (accessed 14 October 2010).
- Gartenstein-Ross, Daveed, and Laura Grossman. (2009). *Homegrown Terrorists in the US and UK: An Empirical Examination of the Radicalisation Process*. Washington DC: Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.
- Hofstede Geert, and Gert Jan Hofstede. (2005). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Ismail, Noor Huda. (2005, 14-15 March). Ngruki: It is a Terrorism School? *Jakarta Post*.
- Laqueur, Walter. (2003). *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Continuum.
- Lawal, Olufemi A. (2002). Social-Psychological Considerations in the Emergence and Growth of Terrorism. In Chris E. Stout (ed.), *The Psychology of Terrorism, Vol. 4: Programmes and Practices in Response and Prevention*. London and Westport, CT: Praeger. pp. 23-32.
- Martinez, Patricia A. (2003). “Deconstructing Jihad: Southeast Asian Contexts”, in Kumar Ramakrishna and See Seng Tan (eds.), *After Bali: The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: World Scientific/Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies. pp. 59-79.

Militant Islam in Indonesia. (2003, September 25). *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Moussaoui, Abd Samad, with Florence Bouquillat. (2003). *Zacarias Moussaoui: The Making of a Terrorist* (trans.). Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods. London: Serpent’s Tail.

Noor, Farish A. (2007, 1 October). Ngruki Revisited: Modernity and Its Discontents at the Pondok Pesantren al-Mukmin of Ngruki, Surakarta. Working Paper 139. Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

Ramakrishna, Kumar. (2009, January). A Holistic Critique of Singapore’s Counter-Ideological Program. *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, pp. 8-11.

Ulph, Stephen. (2007, 24 May). Testimony to the Open Hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Ulph is Senior Fellow, The Jamestown Foundation and Research Associate, Combating Terrorism Center, US Military Academy, West Point, USA. Available online: [http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:ckYYmIffBmkJ:intelligence.senate.gov/hearings.cfm%3Fhearingid%3D2811%26witnessId%3D6519+jihadist+ideology,+centre+of+gravity&hl=en&gl=sg&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEEsjs1d9qgoCvX8SMRWZa8IVYQt6Og-kvF7s2P6H5gHF6nXCziZ2Dvou9uoAYuu-cpeLfJiHCq1feY9Ircph3L\\_61BRtBcArE4aSuwdWFwuZuyYKije9D1LarO703uNV9jG5fZ\\_6&sig=AHIEtbR4tZlxiXZwGQxN-xZ69idaGGijqw](http://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:ckYYmIffBmkJ:intelligence.senate.gov/hearings.cfm%3Fhearingid%3D2811%26witnessId%3D6519+jihadist+ideology,+centre+of+gravity&hl=en&gl=sg&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEEsjs1d9qgoCvX8SMRWZa8IVYQt6Og-kvF7s2P6H5gHF6nXCziZ2Dvou9uoAYuu-cpeLfJiHCq1feY9Ircph3L_61BRtBcArE4aSuwdWFwuZuyYKije9D1LarO703uNV9jG5fZ_6&sig=AHIEtbR4tZlxiXZwGQxN-xZ69idaGGijqw) (accessed 14 October 2010).

Wahid, Abdurrahman. (2002, 14 April). Best Way to Fight Islamic Extremism. *Sunday Times*.

\_\_\_\_\_. (2009). *Radical Pathways: Understanding Muslim Radicalisation in Indonesia*. Westport and London: Praeger Security International.



## CURRENT TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

*Carl Ungerer*

When young analysts join an intelligence agency, the first thing they are taught is that strategic threat assessments are based on a simple calculation: capability plus intent equals threat. That formula may have been fine when calculating the state-based conventional military threats of the Cold War. However, such calculations are increasingly unsuitable to the nature of the contemporary threats from transnational, religiously-based terrorism and violent insurgencies.

As Peter Clarke of the British Metropolitan Police has noted, ‘the current terrorist threat is of such a scale and intractability that we must not only defeat the men...who plot and carry out appalling acts of violence. We must find a way of defeating the ideas that drive them. The *corrosive ideologies* that justify them must be defeated’ (Clark 2007). Intent may not be known before the actual event. And, as the events of September 2001 in the United States showed, capability can be as rudimentary as a box knife.

It is clear that the threat we face from violent religious extremism is different from previous ideological challenges to liberal democracy. As an ideological movement, violent Islamism is decentralised and amorphous. Unlike Stalinism, Fascism or Maoism it does not require a Moscow, Berlin or Beijing as its organisational or ideological focus. The ‘Solid Base’ (Al-Qaeda) is everywhere and its attempt to promote a revitalised caliphate through a global network of mosques, sympathetic non-governmental organisations, failed states, universities and internet sites, is facilitated by the processes of globalisation. Moreover, its strategists exploit the technology and infrastructure of global connectivity. Networks operating informally from Western capitals and in a manner loosely connected to Al-Qaeda and capable of independent and devastating effect have proved notably difficult to identify and disrupt (Bergin, Jones & Ungerer, 2007: 2).

In light of this, I would like advance five propositions concerning the current nature of the terrorist threat, namely:

- Home-grown radicalisation is now the primary source of the terrorist threat to many countries, including Australia.
- As a tactic, terrorism is not only ‘accessible to any group or

individual with a grievance', as Bruce Hoffman once observed, it is becoming a preferred form of criminal violence.

- As a result, the geography of international terrorism is changing, although the Middle East and Southwest Asia will remain central to global terrorism.
- The use of unconventional weapons, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons will remain a distant but serious goal for terrorists.
- Finally, counter-terrorism efforts are improving, but will need greater flexibility in order to prevent further terrorist attacks on home soil.

Let me briefly expand on each of these propositions.

### *Radicalisation at Home*

From our recent research work on radicalisation, it is clear that security and law enforcement agencies around the world face a common problem – violent extremism driven by religious motives that seeks to influence the minds of young second generation Muslims living in the West. Fuelled by the writings of radicals such as the Egyptian Sayid Qutb and Palestinian Abdullah Azzam, radical Islamism seeks to engineer an apocalyptic confrontation with both the West and apostate governments.

In strategic terms, Islamism operates very differently from previous ideological threats to liberal democracy such as Communism or Fascism. Islamism's supranational ideal and protean character means that it can organise, plan and recruit much more effectively in cosmopolitan cities such London, Paris or Sydney than from its more traditional homelands in the Middle East, South Asia or Southeast Asia.

As a matter of strategic preference, the committed terrorist prefers tactics translated from a transnational to a national battlefield as a means of subverting open democracies. Indeed, it is the inherent openness of modern societies that invites recourse to mass casualty attacks on soft civilian targets such as airlines and hotels. The threat is particularly acute in the UK, but similar processes of radicalisation are evident in The Netherlands, France, the United States, and, to a lesser extent, in Australia.

The processes of radicalisation, incitement and propaganda leading to violence have been a tactic employed by terrorist groups for well over two decades. In fact, Hezbollah established combat camera crews in the early 1990s to film attacks on Israeli military positions in Southern Lebanon. Similar tactics are used in Iraq and Afghanistan today.

This footage is then used in television and internet videos as part of a wider propaganda effort.

In terms of radicalising young men in the West, however, it was the presence of charismatic ‘preachers of hate’ such as Omar Bakri in London and Abdul Benbrika in Australia that has been the key factor in turning some young men towards violence. As the former Hizb ut-Tahrir organiser in the UK Ed Husain (2007) explained in his book, *The Islamist*, groups like Hizb-ut Tahrir were able to manipulate the institutional machinery of local government, mosques, and universities to construct the violent and organised character of what they called the ‘British *Jihadi* Network’.

As a result, the British police have uncovered a bewildering array of plots since the July 2005 terrorist attacks on London including the Dhiren Barot plot to plant a radiological or ‘dirty’ bomb in London, the August 2006 ‘airlines plot’ and the botched plan to bomb London and the Glasgow airport. In July 2007, the British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, issued a statement on security in which he said that ‘the police and security agencies currently have to contend with around 30 known plots, monitor over 200 groupings or networks and around 2,000 individuals’. In a more recent speech, the head of the British secret intelligence service, Sir John Sawer (2010), outlined the shifting nature of the global terrorist threat,

Precisely because we are having some success in closing down the space for terrorist recruitment and planning in the UK, the extremists are increasingly preparing their attacks against British targets from abroad. It's not just the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al-Qaeda affiliates in Yemen, Somalia and North Africa pose real threats to the UK. From his remote base in Yemen, Al-Qaeda leader and US national Anwar al-Awlaki broadcast propaganda and terrorist instruction in fluent English over the internet.

The overall assessment of the British intelligence agencies that the terrorist threat is intensifying, and that Al-Qaeda remains intent on using violent means to attack the west and to disrupt the global economy.

Although there are significant differences across jurisdictions, the threat in Australia remains real. A 2006 study conducted for the Australian Immigration Department found that up to 3,000 individuals in Western Sydney were potentially ‘at risk’ in terms of susceptibility to radical ideas and extremism. Currently, in Australia, around 30 individuals have either faced court or are awaiting trial on terrorism-related offences. And media

reports suggest a further 80 individuals remain as ‘persons of interest’ to the intelligence and security agencies. It is increasingly clear the problem we face is a war of perception and propaganda.

Another study conducted by Monash University for the Victorian Police in 2007 found that young men from community groups – particularly from South Asia and the Middle East – believed that the national counter-terrorism laws were specifically aimed at them and that the police had a ‘right to shoot’ any Muslim. Countering these misperceptions and the processes of radicalisation will require a much stronger commitment from both the government and the community to denounce violent extremism and to expose the real purpose of Al-Qaeda’s ‘corrosive ideology’.

The recent debate between scholars Bruce Hoffman and Marc Sageman is interesting in this context (Sciolino 2008). Depending on which side you believe, the assessment that the principal terrorist threat we face remains Al-Qaeda, central in the border areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan or just “bunches of guys” operating autonomously and independently of Al-Qaeda, has important implications for counter-terrorism strategy and operations. In my view, the correct judgement is that both Hoffman and Sageman are right – Al-Qaeda clearly retains a degree of organisational coherence and can continue to operate in places such as Afghanistan and the horn of Africa. But the self-radicalised, informal networks which feed off Al-Qaeda ideology are increasingly of greater concern, particularly in the West.

The Australian government has only recently initiated a major, cross-jurisdictional programme to counter violent extremism in the community. Under the Attorney-General’s portfolio, the government will provide nearly \$10 million in funding for projects that seek to lessen the appeal of extremist narratives and to offer alternative pathways for young individuals who might otherwise be at risk from Al-Qaeda’s propaganda. Measuring the success of such programmes is difficult. However, the government has acknowledged that the problem is one of competing ideological interpretations, and that young, vulnerable people in society need to understand that Al-Qaeda’s message of violence and destruction is not only wrong, it is ultimately futile.

### *Terrorism as Preferred Method of Violence*

The second proposition here is that as terrorism becomes more diffuse, the tactic of terrorist violence can be employed by a growing number of criminal groups and individuals. As ASPI has documented in

previous publications, there is an increasing intersection between terrorism and criminal activity around the world. Some terrorist groups want profits, and some criminal gangs seek to exploit public fear for ideological reasons.

Increasingly, as counter-terrorism policing constrains the activities of these networks, groups are turning towards criminal activities. For example, the extremists who carried out the Madrid train bombings in 2004 funded the operation through the sale of drugs. Economic motives are clearly a high priority for the piracy gangs operating with increasing sophistication off the horn of Africa. And a recent case of the stolen rocket launchers in Sydney, which linked a local crime group with former members of the Australian Defence Forces, highlights the potential seriousness of this linkage for security agencies. More recently, individuals associated with terrorist training camps in Aceh, Indonesia, stole more than \$40,000 from a bank in Sumatra. Given that previous terrorist attacks in Indonesia have cost less than \$20,000 to orchestrate, the consequences of these criminal activities are potentially grave.

The terrorist groups that have thrived in the past twenty years are those who have managed to cross the economic divide between hand-to-mouth existence and long-term economic planning. And there is now a much higher degree of criminal sophistication in money laundering, large-scale fraud and racketeering in association with terrorist groupings. All of which is facilitated by globalisation of credit and ease of internet banking. As a result, the dividing line between an act of terrorism and an act of criminal violence in support of a particular grievance or agenda has become less distinct.

Of particular concern in this regard, are the recent statements and actions of radical animal rights groups such as the North American Animal Liberation Press Office (NAALPO) and the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Both of these groups have openly declared that they will use 'any means necessary' to stop what they consider to be the ongoing torture of animals in farming. In March 2005, the Australian government publicly named PETA as a potential terrorist organisation.

In light of the economic damage caused by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the UK and the recent case of equine influenza in Australia, the prospect of a terrorist attack on the agricultural sector by these groups remains a possibility. However, other than some economic modelling done by the Productivity Commission, limited attention has been given to the potential threat from agro-terrorism in Australia. Given that the Australian agriculture sector is one of the most viable in the world, contributing around 4 per cent of GDP, a more prudential approach to understanding and mitigating the potential threat should be a higher



priority for the government (Ungerer 2008).

### *Changing Geography*

The third proposition is that the geography of terrorism is changing. In his book, Ed Husain (2007) notes that Islamist groups in the UK first exploited the perceived Western indifference to the plight of Bosnian Muslims to radicalise young British recruits. Once recruited, these individuals then started attending training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan to serve in the jihad in Bosnia.

The training of tens of thousands of *mujahideen* throughout the 1990s was instrumental in transferring Islamist political thinking back to metropolitan centres such as London, Paris and The Hague. The removal of the Taliban regime in 2001 and the alliance between Pakistan and the US had diminished many of the opportunities for *jihadist* training in West Asia. But, as the recent attacks in Mumbai and Lahore demonstrated, the infrastructure of terrorism throughout this region continued to provide the ideological and the physical training necessary for the continuing spread of extremist violence.

Indeed, geography may not be as important as it was 10 years ago. Global communications networks provided by the internet are now as important, if not more important, than physical training facilities. As Bruce Hoffman (2006) has noted, the 'physical sanctuary provided by Afghanistan in the 1990s has been replaced by the virtual sanctuary of the internet'. The internet serves two useful purposes for terrorist groups. It provides a global outlet for propaganda activities and, increasingly, it serves as a tool for the radicalisation of individuals.

In order to facilitate the global Islamist insurgency and its appeal, its strategists have exploited the technology and infrastructure of global connectivity. According to one study, there are now over 4,800 activity terrorist websites worldwide, from jihadist groups in the Middle East to white supremacist groups in the US. Our recent study of internet radicalisation in Southeast Asia found that the terrorist presence on the internet was evolving rapidly from the computer hacking and bomb-making manuals of a few years ago towards sophisticated social-networking sites in which potential recruits were identified, groomed and radicalised.

One case study concerned a young law graduate in Singapore who attempted to join the Taliban in Afghanistan after viewing hours of material online. A more recent study on the posting and distribution of YouTube videos showed the potential radicalising influence of Web 2.0

applications that integrated information with social networking. In one example, a young male who identified himself as an Irish rugby fan posted a comment citing his wish to convert to Islam after watching a martyrdom video. Within weeks he was being targeted by other users, with radical links, whose aim, at a minimum, was religious conversion. Most analysts acknowledge that governments have so far failed to respond effectively to the new 'virtual' battleground of the internet.

In Australia, we are having a debate about internet censorship and the government has proposed the use of filters to ban certain materials. But the ease of access to violent extremist material around the world and the lack of uniform legislative controls mean that tackling the problem is difficult, if not impossible.

If terrorism can be characterised as 'propaganda by deed', then the increasing sophistication and speed of transmission provided by the internet is likely to continue to fuel global terrorism – possibly in countries or regions that were previously believed to be immune from such messages as the internet becomes more available to more users. The proliferation of 'grey zones' or an area of statelessness is another factor in providing opportunities for terrorist activity. In addition, the ongoing problem of the tribal areas in Pakistan and the resurgence of the Taliban in southern areas of Afghanistan, regions of endemic conflict such as southern Somalia and Yemen provide fertile ground for terrorist logistics, training and operations.

Such zones exist when states lack the capacity to exert real jurisdictional control in terms of competent law enforcement. Between the Balkans and Bangladesh there are large populations dissatisfied with their systems of government and inclined towards violent opposition. And Australia's geostrategic isolation is becoming a less effective barrier to the sorts of transnational security threats facing other parts of the globe.

### *CBRN*

The fourth proposition concerns the potential terrorist use of unconventional weapons including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. Much media analysis has focused on this potential doomsday scenario. And, as the former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice once famously said, "We don't want the next smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." But there is a great deal of misdiagnosis of the threat from CBRN terrorism.

Given the demonstrated capacity of sub-state actors to employ non-conventional tactics, such as the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo's use of

chemical and biological weapons in the 1990s or the anthrax letters used against political and media targets in the US in 2001, it would seem imprudent to discount the possibility of this kind of terrorism increasing in the future. However, the technical difficulties of acquiring, weaponising and disseminating these weapons remain the same problems that ultimately led the major powers to walk away from offensive military programmes in the 1950s and 1960s.

It is true that the information revolution has increased public knowledge about these types of weapons. The Central Intelligence Agency has noted that more than 40 terrorist organisations are actively seeking a CBRN capability. But, as yet, no terrorist group has mastered the complex technical difficulties to achieve a CBRN capability that would match the lethality of previous conventional plots.

That said, there is clear evidence that the Al-Qaeda network remains determined to achieve a CBRN capability. And even a low-grade chemical or biological attack using a simple method of dispersion can have a disproportional psychological impact. So for intelligence agencies around the world, the net assessment on CBRN remains ‘maybe’.

The combination of increasing lethality in terrorist attacks motivated by religious extremists such as Al-Qaeda, who view the world in apocalyptic, Manichean terms, combined with the relative ease of acquiring low-grade chemical or biological agents, suggests that this threat will remain at the forefront of intelligence and security considerations for many years ahead.

### *Counter-Terrorism Efforts Improving*

The final proposition concerns the role of counter-terrorism strategy and operations in disrupting and defeating terrorism. Across the broad foreign and security policy community in Australia, terrorism was not considered a strategic threat before 9/11. The publication of first ever Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper, *In the National Interest*, in 1997, correctly identified a number of potential non-military threats to Australia’s security interests. However, terrorism was not listed as one of them. Likewise, the 2000 Australian Defence White Paper made no mention of a terrorist threat emanating from either the Middle East or the Southeast Asian regions that would require the deployment of the Australian Defence Forces.

In hindsight, such a fundamental misdiagnosis of the emerging and future threats to Australian security interests appears both negligent and incompetent. However, Australia was not alone in misreading the

emerging organisational and operational capabilities of the Al-Qaeda network and its regional affiliates. As the '9/11 Commission' in the United States has stated, 'the modest national effort exerted to contain Serbia and its depredations in the Balkans between 1995 and 1999...was orders of magnitude larger than that devoted to Al Qaeda' (9/11 Commission Report 2004: 340).

Notwithstanding its significant failings prior to 9/11 and the subsequent Bali bombings, the Australian government is investing heavily in the intelligence community as a key tool for combating this new transnational threat. Over A\$10 billion in new funding has been provided to the national security agencies since 2001, with the intelligence agencies receiving the bulk of both this new money. The legislation governing terrorism has also been significantly amended.

In March 2006, 'Jihad' Jack Thomas was initially sentenced to five years in prison for receiving funds from a terrorist organisation, before being released on appeal, whilst in June 2006, Faheem Khalid Lodhi was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment for preparing to commit a terrorist act in Sydney. More recently in Melbourne, 6 men associated with Abdul Benbrika were sentenced to up to 12 years jail for planning an attack on sporting and transport venues. An associated trial in Sydney is ongoing.

As this new security threat has evolved, it requires a police and intelligence response that is simultaneously global and local. This fact, as Peter Clarke observes, renders modern counter-terrorism efforts increasingly political. Religious extremism and violence conducted in major metropolitan centres, inevitably politicises the conventional policing of law and order in a democratic society. Such politicisation becomes more problematic when the use of violence and subversion serves an ideology that feeds off global and local perceptions of ethnic and religious grievance, the alienation of minorities and the escalation of identity politics.

### *Conclusion*

We no longer talk about a 'war on terrorism'. It was never a 'war' in the traditional sense anyway. But the international security environment will be dealing with terrorism and counter-terrorism issues as a first order priority for a generation or more. As the RAND analyst Brian Jenkins argues the 'war on terrorism' is a more like a 'banner of many missions'. Those missions include the kinetic aspects of military force required to combat armed terrorist groups, but they also include the social and economic policies to lessen the appeal of 'Al-Qaedaism' around the world.

Increasingly, counter-terrorism efforts will need to be focused more on the ideological aspects of this conflict as the internet becomes a more ubiquitous tool of radicalisation and propaganda.

A recent RAND study of how 268 terrorist groups ended between 1968 and 2006, found that in over 80 per cent of cases, it was policing and co-option into political processes that brought most terrorist groups to an end. The ultimate goal of counter-terrorism policing and intelligence, therefore, must be to reduce the risk of further terrorist attacks and to drain the ideological swamp from where notions that violence in support of religious or political goals is an acceptable and worthwhile course of action.

### *References*

- Bergin, Anthony, David Martin Jones and Carl Ungerer. (2007, September). Beyond belief: Islamism, Radicalization and the Counter-Terrorism Response. *ASPI Strategic Insight* 37.
- Clarke, Peter. (2007, April 25). Learning From Experience: Counter-Terrorism in the UK Since 9/11. Colin Cramphorn memorial lecture.  
[http://cms.met.police.uk/news/major\\_operational\\_announcements/terrorism/dac\\_peter\\_clark\\_s\\_speech\\_on\\_counter\\_terrorism](http://cms.met.police.uk/news/major_operational_announcements/terrorism/dac_peter_clark_s_speech_on_counter_terrorism).
- Hoffman, Bruce. (2006, May 4). The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists. Testimony to the US House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.
- Husain, Ed. (2007). *The Islamist*. London: Penguin, 2007.
- Sawer, John, (2010, October 28). Britain's Secret Frontline. Speech to the Society of Editors. London.
- Sciolino, Elaine. (2008, June 8). A Not Very Private Feud Over Terrorism. *New York Times*.
- 9/11 Commission Report. (2004).  
<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf>.

Ungerer, Carl. (2008, August 19). An All-Hazards Approach to National Security: Preparing for and Responding to Threats to Australian Agriculture. *ASPI Policy Analysis*.



## RISING UP TO THE CHALLENGES OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISM AND MILITANCY IN MALAYSIA

*Ruhanas Harun*

Malaysia is a secular democracy. Even so, Islam occupies a significant position in its politics and has been able to influence political discourses and practices. For the Malay-Muslim majority, Islam is more than just a system of beliefs and an ethnic identity marker in a multi-ethnic society. It is also a cultural resource from which concepts, principles, rules, norms and laws are drawn to provide basis for government and to argue for political and social reforms. This being the case, it is not surprising to find Islam being entrenched in the Malaysian Constitution as the official religion of the Federation and its constituent states. Political parties, non-governmental organisations, loosely structured congregational groups (*jemaah*) and militant or radical groups also draw on the Islamic idiom appearing on the country's political landscape in the last four decades and engaging the state in conflict over the latter's domination and control of Islamic symbols, leadership and institutions. Some of these Islamist groups operate within the national boundary and some develop extensive networks that transcend national borders.

Irrespective of their goals, organisational structure and the extent of networking, the activities of Islamic political party, politically-engaged Islamic NGOs, *jemaah* and militant groups are of great concern to the Malaysian authority in case they cause political instability, disrupt racial harmony, hamper economic development, endanger regime survival and threaten national security. Furthermore, in the post-conditions 9/11 and especially with the global war on terror, evidence of Islamic militancy in the country can easily cause the international community to regard Malaysia as a 'hotbed of terrorism', a label that it can do without if it wants to avoid external political pressures or military intervention and to attract foreign investment into the country. To date and consistent with the current policy of controlling and monitoring religious groups, the Malaysian government has at its disposal two laws which can be invoked to weaken or suppress those Islamist groups whose activities are deemed to disrupt civil order. They are the provision in the Administration of Islamic law concerning 'deviationist teachings' in Islam (*ajaran sesat*) and the Internal Security Act (ISA). While it is normal to expect the Malaysian government to use these mechanisms to suppress undesirable Islamist groups, however, the action, if and when taken, could also be construed as



a violation of civil liberties. Not only that, it can also invite criticisms from the Malay-Muslim populace as being anti-Islamic. Such criticisms can easily reduce the state's credibility as the key transmitter of Islamic doctrines, policies and programmes in the country. Worse, it would put the government in a bad light vis-à-vis PAS, its main rival in politics.

Since the 1970s, Malaysia has identified Islamic extremism and militancy as one of the threats to its national security. Although relatively small in number and strength, groups operating under this tendency caused serious security concern to the state, which in turn adopted the twin strategies of suppression and engagement to respond to these challenges. The state has openly declared that it will not tolerate any group or activity that can create disunity and disturb racial harmony in a country whose survival is highly dependent on internal peace and stability. While the state considers it important to eliminate threats and challenges from Islamic extremism and militancy, it is also mindful of the fact that antagonistic policies towards Islamic groups might result in a backlash that will endanger regime security and national unity. It must be said that in reality, in Malaysia, the influence of Islamic extremists and their activities is limited due to certain factors, of which some are unique to Malaysia, as well as the effectiveness of measures taken to eliminate this influence.

### *The Development of Islamic Groups in Malaysia*

Islamic organisations and movements in Malaysia have been in existence even before the rise of the phenomenon of Islamic revivalism of the 1970s. The oldest and the most established of these groups is the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS), a political party that has become the main rival of the current ruling component party in the Malaysian government, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). PAS has been in existence since 1951 and advocated an Islamic state goal, an objective that it has not renounced until today. Although currently it is able to lead the government in only two states (Kelantan and Kedah), following the general election of 2008, as a form of political Islam, the party is a force to reckon with having gained strong support from rural-based Malays in the states of Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis and Terengganu in several general elections. The support for PAS has also broadened to include many urban-based followers in other states such as Perak, Selangor and in Kuala Lumpur.

Aside from PAS, there are now a number of Islam-oriented non-governmental organisations and institutions occupying the civil society

space in Malaysia. These organisations grew out of the need and desire to provide social and economic facilities to Muslims while some are devoted to raising the level of Islamic consciousness in the community.<sup>1</sup> Among them are the *Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah* (Islamic Dakwah Foundation), *Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia* (Malaysian Muslim Welfare Organisation, or PERKIM), the Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement, (*Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* or ABIM), Malaysian Muslim Students Association, Sisters in Islam and others. Institutions set up by the government or supported by it include the Institute of Islamic Understanding (IKIM), the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC) and the Department of Islamic Advancement (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam* or JAKIM). The establishment of these organisations were not politically-motivated, but to support social and religious activities of its members and target groups. PERKIM for example, is an organisation which was set up to look into the welfare of new converts to Islam, while others emerged out of practical considerations and the need to promote greater consciousness about Islam. These groups and many others continue to exist and have not developed into militant groups.

A growing challenge for the authorities since the 1970s had been the activities of *dakwah songsang* (deviant *dakwah*) groups with some propagating activities that were considered as extremist in nature and thus posed a serious threat to public order and racial harmony. Two violent incidents in 1978 and 1980 served to highlight the seriousness of potential extremism and militancy in Malaysia if they were not contained. In 1978, a group of Muslim fundamentalists, caught desecrating all statues in a Hindu temple except one, were beaten to death by a vigilante group of Indian temple guardians. In October 1980, another incident occurred, that confirmed the fears of the authorities about the violent potential of certain deviant groups, when a group of Muslims attacked a police station in Batu Pahat in Johore. Although both incidents appeared to be ‘minor’ by international standards, in Malaysia, they were looked upon as worrying trend and therefore needed to be ‘nipped in the bud’. It served to discourage other potential extremist groups from developing and propagating terrorist acts.

This early period also witnessed the surfacing of groups associated with *dakwah songsang* and Islamic radicalism. In 1977, a Penang-based Crypto cult emerged to claim that the Malaysian government was not giving Islam its proper due and aimed to set up a

---

<sup>1</sup> Simon Barraclough, ‘Managing the Challenges of Islamic Revival in Malaysia: A Regime Perspective’, *Asian Survey*, vol. XXIII, no. 8 (1983), p. 959.

theocratic order by means of violent jihad.<sup>2</sup> The government took action to clamp down the movement only in 1992 as it did not think that the group's activities then were serious enough to threaten public order and national security. Another group, whose interpretation of Islam was in opposition to the government, was the *Koperasi Angkatan Revolusi Islam Malaysia* (KARIM, or Malaysian Islamic Revolutionary Front). Formed in 1974 in Kuala Lumpur, KARIM preached the overthrow of government through violence. It was later banned and its leaders detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA). In 1980, riots by farmers in Kedah demonstrating against the government's move to introduce a forced-savings scheme were traced to a militant organisation *Pertubuhan Angkatan Sabilullah*, which according to the government had numbered among its associates, members of the opposition party, PAS.<sup>3</sup> These groups were relatively unknown to the public and their influence did not spread beyond the confinement of their groups. One of the reasons for their inability to expand their influence was the small membership and effective action by the government through the use of strong measures to control and suppress their activities, often in the name of national security.

### *State Response: Rationale and Mechanisms*

Realising that religious extremism, if not checked may endanger domestic harmony, public security and in the worst scenario, regime survival, the Malaysian government formulated and implemented two approaches to counter and contain the danger. These can be summed up as suppression and engagement which have proven to be effective in combating religious extremism. In the words of former Minister of Home Affairs, Tun Musa Hitam, Malaysia's comprehensive strategy for combating extremism consists of a "*complex process of accommodation (when this is fully justified), co-optation (when this is required) and confrontation (when it is necessary)*".<sup>4</sup>

Since the 1970s, contestations emerged from Islamic groups whose aim was the eventual replacement of the regime in power with a 'more' Islamic one, if not with one that is completely Islamic. Such groups include *Arqam*, an organisation which became radicalised and manifested

---

<sup>2</sup> J. C. Liow, 'Deconstructing Political Islam in Malaysia: UMNO's Response to PAS' Religio-Political Dialectic'. *IDSS Working Paper Series* (2003), p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> David Camroux, 'State Response to Islamic Resurgence In Malaysia: Accommodation, Co-option and Confrontation', *Asian Survey*, vol. 36, no. 9 (1996), p. 857.

its violent opposition to the authority since 1988. It is said to have an extensive network in Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia and even in Central Asia.<sup>5</sup> The government feared that the group might subvert established Islam, create disunity among Muslims and eventually take over power. In responding to this challenge, the government used both repressive and dissuasive methods. Throughout the 1990s, the Malaysian public witnessed a systematic campaign against *Arqam*, launched through the mass media and the distribution of pamphlets, Friday sermons and public lectures in mosques and offices.<sup>6</sup> Investigations were conducted to ascertain whether or not the activities of *Arqam* were dangerous and threatening to the national security and racial harmony. In 1994, *Arqam* was accused of harbouring extreme political ambitions and that its leaders had plans “to capture political power through magic and violence”. In August 1994, the National Fatwa Council issued a ruling which declared the teachings of *Arqam* as “deviationists” (*ajaran sesat*), resulting in the banning of the organisation by the government. *Arqam*’s leader, Ashaari Muhammad fled to Thailand, but was later arrested in September the same year and brought back to be detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA). He was subsequently released in 2004. Deprived of its leadership and subjected to constant surveillance from the Malaysian authorities, *Arqam* never got back to its former ‘glory’.

Not all government’s policy of using force in tackling challenges to regime security from Islamist groups have been successful. The Memali incident of November 1985 illustrates the limits to the use of force to suppress what was perceived as extremism.<sup>7</sup> The police raid on the villagers, ordered by the then acting Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, Musa Hitam, resulted in the death of 17 people (14 civilians and 4 policemen). The government White Paper, published after the incident blamed the confrontation on the extremists who were trying to spread deviationist teachings and disrupt public order.<sup>8</sup> As for the Minister, the

<sup>5</sup> Stephane Doyet & Remy Madinier, (2005), *Les Musulmans d’Asie du Sud Est face au vertige de la radicalization*. Paris: Les Indes Savantes, p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, ‘The Banning of Darul Arqam in Malaysia’, *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2005), p. 93.

<sup>7</sup> The Memali incident occurred in a remote village of Memali in the northern Malaysian state of Kedah, where police stormed upon a community of inadequately armed PAS villagers resisting the arrest of their leader, Ibrahim Mahmood (aka Ibrahim Libya) who was accused by the authorities of abusing Islam and inciting rebellion against the state. The group’s leader had been under the watchful eyes of the government because of his preaching of extremist views of Islam and his political association with PAS.

<sup>8</sup> Government of Malaysia, *Kertas Perintah 21 Tahun 1986: The Memali Incident*. (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Home Affairs.

affair dented his political credibility and wisdom in his ability to handle sensitive issues such as responding to challenges coming from Islamic groups. Although the affair happened more than two decades ago, it is neither forgotten nor forgiven, for its memory is still being kept alive by relatives of survivors. The Islamic Party of Malaysia, PAS, commemorates this incident, a source of embarrassment for the government, as proof of the government's injustice in dealing with opposing Islamic groups.<sup>9</sup>

The beginning of the new millennium witnessed a growing threat to the government from Islamic extremist and militant groups in Malaysia. An incident related to militant Islamic activities surfaced in June 2000 when a group which called itself as '*Al Maunah*'<sup>10</sup> managed to successfully pull off an arms heist at a Malaysian Army Reserve Camp in Perak, stealing weapons from the armoury. It proved to be a huge embarrassment for the government given the manner in which the group managed to penetrate the camp's security structure by dressing up in military uniforms and driving jeeps painted in camouflaged green<sup>11</sup>. Their leader, Mohamad Amin Razali, confessed that they were on a mission to overthrow the Malaysian government by force. The siege by the Malaysian security forces resulted in the surrender of the group's members. Its leader was tried for waging war against the King, convicted, and was hanged in August 2004. Other members received various degrees of sentences, including life sentence and detention under the ISA. The government did not take any action against the group prior to this as there was no proof that their activities were disrupting public security or detrimental to national security.

The dismantling of the *Al Maunah* group was followed by other operations to suppress several other militant Islamic organisations and groups whose activities were considered threatening to public security. They include a militant Islamic group, the '*Jihad Gang*', a group that was connected to a range of crimes over a period of two years, including the bombing of a church, an Indian temple, the murder of a politician and several other criminal activities.<sup>12</sup> Their criminal activities made it easier

---

<sup>9</sup> PAS considers those who died in the Memali incident as 'martyrs' (*shahid*) and has set up a Memali Fund to collect donation for the families of Ibrahim Libya, the group leader and others who died. PAS official organ, Harakah, to this day frequently carries the news about the incident.

<sup>10</sup> *Al Maunah*, formed in September 1998, was lawfully registered as "Islamic Martial Arts" association, and claimed to have branches in many parts of Malaysia. Members must be individuals of Islamic faith and above 18 years of age.

<sup>11</sup> J.C. Liow, (2004), p. 244.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

for the government to justify their elimination. Another militant group, the KMM — *Kumpulan Militan Malaysia* (the Malaysian Militant Group) founded in 1995 by a Malaysian, Zainon Ismail, also advocated the overthrow of the Malaysian government and subsequently, the establishment of an Islamic regime. Like the *Al Maunah* group, KMM's operational strategy was a combination of criminal activities and political militancy. It was believed to have a wide networking with external militant groups in the region, including *Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI), *Jemaah Islamiyah Singapura* (JIS) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).<sup>13</sup> KMM also dispatched its members to take part in the conflict in Ambon, Indonesia between Christians and Muslims.<sup>14</sup> The Malaysian government launched a nationwide operation to capture KMM members between December 2001 and January 2002, resulting in the arrest of more than 70 members, including one of its leaders, Nik Adli Nik Aziz, and detained them under the ISA.<sup>15</sup>

In many of these security operations (police and military) against Islamic extremist groups, the Malaysian government resorted to the use of the Internal Security Act (ISA) to detain those arrested in the operations. While the general public in Malaysia on the whole seemed not to mind the use of the ISA on militants and extremist elements, there were segments of society which viewed this with concern. In August 2001, the Malaysian Bar Council released a statement viewing “*with concern the alleged threat to national peace and security posed by members of the KMM*”. At the same time, it noted “*with equal concern the use of the ISA in the arrest of such persons*”. The Council suggested that these arrests can be affected through other available statutory provisions such as the Penal Code, Arms Act or Firearms Act. It also urged the government to allow detainees access to their constitutional rights and to trial in a court of law. However, such dissenting opinion did not affect the efficacy or the continued usage of ISA as a mechanism to control extremism and militancy in the country.

### *Putting Them Back on the Right Track: De-Radicalisation Programme*

As indicated above, suppression is only one of the means available to the state in its campaign against Islamic militancy. A more subtle method is engaging groups or individuals into renouncing their activities

---

<sup>13</sup> Utusan Malaysia, 25 June 2002.

<sup>14</sup> The Star, 14 August 2001.

<sup>15</sup> J.C. Liow, (2004), p. 245.

regarded as prejudicial to national security. Engagement constitutes policies and programmes designed to win the hearts and minds of the target groups with the aim to neutralise or to win them over. In Malaysia, this has been successfully employed earlier during the war against communist insurgents. Later use of the ‘soft’ method is based on the refinement, adaptation and elaboration of the methods used during this period.

Malaysia’s engagement policy of Islamic extremists includes a programme designed at “de-radicalisation”, targeting those detained under the ISA. The government has formulated a structured programme designed to rehabilitate those individuals or groups who have been involved in activities considered as jeopardising national security. The Malaysian de-radicalisation programme is a concerted effort between the police (Special Branch) and various government agencies. The role of the police/Special Branch in this programme is focussed on the issue of national security, although in principle the Special Branch remains as the main architect of the rehabilitation programme. The Malaysian de-radicalisation programme is different from that of many other countries in that it separates those detained under the ISA from the common criminals because they need a different type of rehabilitation. De-radicalisation programme for religious extremists for example, requires the role of religious institutions such as JAKIM to take care of the spiritual aspect of the treatment.

The programme consists of three stages, namely the early detainment period, the detainment period and the post-detainment period. In the first stage, the individual who commits an offence prejudicial to national security can be detained for a maximum period of 60 days for investigation purposes. The main aim at this stage of detention is to “win over” the detainee through various methods. If the authorities are satisfied that the detainee no longer poses a threat, then he may be released. If not, he will be sent to the Kamunting Detention Centre for two years, and may be further extended if an extension is necessary.

The second stage of de-radicalisation process begins once the detainee is placed at the Kamunting Detention Centre, which is under the purview of the Prisons Department of Malaysia. While undergoing the rehabilitation programme, a detainee has access to the rights of reassessment and opportunity to appeal to the Advisory Board which meets to review the case every six months. The rehabilitation programme, known as “Human Development Programme” (HDP) covers three areas of discipline development, personality enhancement and social skills and training programme. The main objective of the HDP is to enable a detainee to return to the fold of society without much disjuncture since the modules



in the programme are designed to gradually ‘mould’ them to the values and practices of the society that they have deviated from. At the Detention Centre, a detainee will undergo rehabilitation programme to ‘disengage’ himself from his past activities. Relevant agencies and individuals are asked to collaborate in this programme in teaching and facilitating modules tailored to the purpose of rehabilitation of detainees. There are three main issues of contention among Muslim detainees that the de-radicalisation programme aims to correct. The first is the association of jihad among detainees with violent means and act of martyrdom. The second is the contention that Malaysia is not an Islamic country since it does not implement the *Hudud* law, and that its political system is Western oriented. The third is the detainees’ hatred against the West, especially the United States and its policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The modules taught during the detention period seek to provide detainees with a correct understanding of Islam, expose them to various issues in the Muslim world through open intellectual discussions with experts. The third stage in the rehabilitation programme is the post-detainment period which begins immediately after the release of the detainee. Even after his release, an ISA detainee will need to keep in ‘close contact’ with the police by way of regular reporting to the police station nearest to his domicile.

Although there is no survey available to determine the success of this programme, it is believed that the Malaysian de-radicalisation programme has been successful in rehabilitating extremists and eliminating their activities. Despite its unpopularity, the ISA has been effective as a mechanism to contain the spread of extremism and militancy in Malaysia. It has unwittingly created and instilled fear into the minds of the public of the consequences of jeopardising the nation’s political stability and national security. While there are those who opposed the ISA even if employed with good intention, there are others who view it as a ‘necessary evil’ to prevent the nation from descending into chaos. Some argued that this is preferable to inviting external powers to safeguard the nation’s security and handle delicate issues of religious extremism.

### *Future Challenges and Conclusion*

The success of countering extremism and militancy in Malaysia is due to a host of factors. Malaysia is a moderate Muslim country, a situation born out of several circumstances and factors. The majority population of the country, the Malays, have a peace-loving culture, a culture of tolerance and willingness to help. While the Malays are known



to be religious, they are not fanatics. Their understanding of ‘jihad’ is not translated as armed struggle, but that of a moral struggle. The idea of ‘jihad’ as an armed struggle is an alien culture being introduced from outside. Until today, the idea of ‘violent jihad’ has not caught up with Muslims in Malaysia. There is no group important enough to propagate such jihad. In addition, there is no concrete issue that can be turned into a common cause that can be exploited to galvanize the population’s support for a violent jihad. This is in contrast to other Muslim societies such as in the Middle East or Pakistan where a culture of political violence seem to be continually perpetuated.

A recent survey indicated that among the Malay-Muslims in Malaysia, there is preference for a gradual change in society, as opposed to violent change. This attitude is in tandem with the culture and character of the Malays who would normally consider every aspect of a subject before making changes in society, even when these changes are to be made in the name of Islam.<sup>16</sup> Another contributing factor in facilitating the efforts at combating religious extremism in Malaysia is the streamlining of religious education through the Ministry of Education and religious authorities. The Ministry provides guidelines on ‘standardised’ religious education made available to students. The monitoring of religious schools and *pondok* schools reduced the potential of these institutions into becoming a ‘hotbed’ of extremism and militancy or a ‘factory’ for producing *jihadis* as in the case of Pakistan. Contrary to some foreign media reports of the support for Osama bin Laden among Malaysian youths because they were found to be selling and wearing Osama T-shirts, in reality, there is no real excitement for Osama or Taleban among youths in the country. Malaysian youths have become savvy about generating income from an unlikely source and a phenomenon, for these same guys would be selling and wearing Michael Jackson or Che Guevara T-shirts. Such action would indicate an entrepreneurial prowess rather than a commitment to an ideology or a political cause.

In general, Malaysia enjoys political and social stability, peace and economic development that most citizens do not want to relinquish because they have a stake and interest to keep it going. The monarchy, an important pillar of Malay society has always acted as a ‘pacifier’, provider of moral guidance and a symbol of mediation in an adverse situation. As the head of Islam, the monarchy in Malaysia has the authority, both at the formal and informal levels, to guide religious activities and orientations. Radicalisation to the Malays would be contrary to the culture of peace and

---

<sup>16</sup> Kamarulzaman Yussof, Unpublished report “Radikalisme di Malaysia”. p.80.

harmony of their society and its ‘*adab*’ (civility). The monarchy, as a respected institution, and one that is seen as above politics, serves as a moderating influence that restrains radical attitude and activities among Malay-Muslims in the country. The multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious character that Malaysia is, are factors that act as a deterrent to religious extremism in the country. The state is fully aware that it has to develop and cultivate a policy of moderation so as not to antagonise the various groups and to stop them from falling into extremist groups of different religions and cultures. Malaysia’s uniqueness lies in its ability to balance and accommodate different demands specific to different ethnic and religious groups with the necessity of oneness of the nation. With a small population and a fairly controlled and disciplined society, the prospect of an over-excited militant galvanizing the population towards the path of violence has a much smaller chance of success in comparison to a country easily consumed by mob passion such as Pakistan or Indonesia. The success of Malaysia’s containment of religious extremism and de-radicalisation policy must be seen in the light of these factors that are unique to Malaysia.

By any standard, especially in the Muslim world, violence resulting from religious extremism and militancy in Malaysia is an exception rather than the rule. Unlike Pakistan, which is going through a period of intense terrorist activities, Malaysia does not have the dynamics of militancy, poverty and political instability that can precipitate upheavals to the country. Malaysia’s Islamic radicals do not have the strength or the grounds to galvanise the support of the masses. Despite being politically divided between two major political parties, the majority Malay-Muslim population of Malaysia share a common aim and an equal opportunity to promote the interest of their group. Such situation is not found some Muslim countries with a politico-sectarian divide. In retrospective, it can be said that the Malaysian authorities’ denial of the growth of Shiism in the country is a form of pre-emptive measure to stem out potential sectarian violence. In addition, Muslims in Malaysia do not feel aggrieved by any denial of fundamental rights unlike the case of Malay-Muslims in Thailand, or that of the Muslim minority in the Philippines. But it remains vulnerable because of the country’s proximity to troubled areas and the exposure to transnational linkages of terrorist network in an age of globalisation. Malaysia also has open borders and fairly liberal immigration rules that could lead to intrusion by persons who may be prejudicial to the nation’s security.

There is a growing consciousness in Malaysia about democratic space and the role of civil society among citizens and rulers alike, although

at the moment it is still restrained. Media in Malaysia is not entirely free, unlike that in Pakistan or Indonesia where it can fuel passion and violence through reporting and description of sensitive events and issues. The Malaysian media accept this limitation of its role through a kind of self-censorship to avoid instigating pandemonium or creating violence. The state takes a pre-emptive measure to ensure the delicate balance and vulnerable peaceful co-existence between groups of different and opposing intentions through control of the media, a measure that can be described at best, as out of necessity, but hopefully a temporary one.

It is common to make a correlation between the level and condition of socio-economic development with the rise of religious extremism and militancy. In Malaysia, the socio-economic development can be seen as a two-edged sword. It reduced the situation of poverty and deprivation that pushed many, out of frustration, into seeking solace in violent jihad, a fact occurring in many Muslim societies. Malaysia has been able to remove this root of discontent and grievances in society. However, on the other hand, it is also noted that many cases of violence and forms of religious extremism and the push for change among Muslim groups come from the middle class, who after having achieved some measure of economic and social comfort; they now claim political rights due to them. Some do this out of dissatisfaction over the current system and want a change. Their dilemma is that economically they benefit from the system while their ideological inclination is not fulfilled. At this juncture, these groups cannot afford to destroy the foundation of their economic and social well-being, since the future is unpredictable. The challenge for the Malaysian state is how to balance the inevitable demand for democratic rights with that of keeping the situation under control.

In conclusion, it is observed that confrontations between Islamic extremist groups and the government in Malaysia is an exception rather than the rule. They do not take place on a large scale or nation-wide, but are confined to certain groups with demands ranging from reforms within existing socio-political framework to a regime change by force. The state introduced laws, some of them controversial, to deal with the challenges and threats to its national security. Among these laws, the most prominent is the ISA, which, the criticisms and opposition levelled at it, is still in use. With the event of September 11, 2001, criticisms of ISA became slightly muted, enabling the government to justify its use without causing too much embarrassment. It lends credibility to what the government has been doing all along: that it was necessary to use repressive measures to eliminate the dangers that militancy pose to national security. The success of Malaysia's de-radicalisation programme can be attributed to several

factors, of which the most important are its societal values. The Malaysian political system and societal values allow little room for religious extremism and militancy. The state and society find consensus on the value of moderation, the understanding of Islam as a religion of peace and the appropriate strategies to deal with contestations coming from extremist groups and individuals.



# THE LURE OF YOUTH INTO TERRORISM

*Thomas Koruth Samuel*

## ABSTRACT

*While there is a great deal of debate on what constitutes terrorism and who is a terrorist, there is little doubt that youths are beginning to play a significant role in this particular arena. Structured and deliberate strategies have been formulated by terrorists to radicalise and recruit young people into committing acts of violence. The advantages in targeting the youths into joining terrorists groups are many and terrorists are displaying increased capability and capacity in enlisting them. This coupled with the growing exploitation of technology such as the Internet has allowed the terrorists a far and wide reach.*

## *Background*

In 1951, Eric Hoffer, a noted author and lecturer who was completely self-taught, published *The True Believer*, which was based upon his own observations of the rise of fascism, Nazism and communism as reactions to the Great Depression. He postulated that for the ‘true believer’ (someone so committed to a cause that he or she is willing to unthinkingly die for it) it was the frustrations of life which led them to join a cause that gave meaning to their own existence. Understandably, the more frustrated they felt, the more attracted and susceptible they were to extreme revolutionary solutions to their problems.<sup>1</sup> This observation, made more than half a century ago, sadly but accurately describes the dynamics and relations between youth and terrorism.

The definition for who a youth is, varies among countries. The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines ‘youth’, as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years.<sup>2</sup> What is clear, however, is that terrorist organisations today are recruiting and influencing youths to carry their dastardly acts in the name of God and twisted ideologies. Sadly many youths, irrespective of race, religion, educational background or economic status have fallen prey to the rhetoric propagated by these groups.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tim Madigan, *The True Believer Visited*, <http://bartoncii.xanga.com/581648156/more-on-eric-hoffer-the-true-believer-revisited/>, 4 April 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Youth and the United Nations, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/qanda.htm>.

The statistics are grim. In Peter Singer's book, 'Children at War', 300,000 children, both boys and girls, under the age of 18 are combatants fighting in almost 75 per cent of the world's conflicts. It is frightening to note that 80 per cent of these conflicts where children are present include fighters under the age of 15 and approximately 40 per cent of the armed organisations in the world (157 of 366) use child soldiers.<sup>3</sup>

With no skill beyond that of a fighter, little integration with society, and a tumultuous past with a myriad of psychological and emotional issues, should these children live to reach their youth, what would their future be?

The Mumbai attacks in 2008 that left 165 civilians and security personnel dead was a series of ten coordinated attacks orchestrated by ten individuals. What was chilling was the common thread that bound them together – they were all young. Besides the eldest terrorist, Nazir/Abu Umer who was 28 years old, the average age of the other nine terrorists was only 23 years. The leader, Ismail Khan was just 25 years old.

In the Philippines, the involvement of youths in terrorism was clearly seen in the case of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). The ASG, listed by the United States as a foreign terrorist organisation<sup>4</sup> seeks a separate Islamic state for the country's Muslim minority.<sup>5</sup> Abdurajak Janjalani, the founder of the ASG was only in his 20's when he was influenced to join extremist activities and only 26 when he formed the ASG. When he died in a police encounter in 1998, his younger brother, Khadaffy Janjalani was only 22 years old when he took over as the new *emir* or leader of the ASG. In 2009, the ASG was led by Yasser Igasan who was only 21 years old when he joined the movement.<sup>6</sup> Another group in Philippines, the *Rajah Solaiman Movement* (RSM), originated from a cell of militant students and teachers at a religious school in Luzon.<sup>7</sup> It was founded by Ahmad Santos who was radicalised when he was only 21 years old. The RSM is alleged

---

<sup>3</sup> Peter W. Singer, *Children At War*, New York: Pantheon, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Rommel C. Banlaoi, *Essays on the Abu Sayyaf Group*, Philippine Institute for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (PIPVTR), 2008, [http://pipvtr.com/pipvtr/files/Book\\_AHAI\\_Essays\\_on\\_ASG\\_Book\\_Banlaoi\\_2008.pdf](http://pipvtr.com/pipvtr/files/Book_AHAI_Essays_on_ASG_Book_Banlaoi_2008.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Abu Sayyaf Group, Council on Foreign Relations, 29 May 2009, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/9235/abu\\_sayyaf\\_group\\_philippines\\_islamist\\_separatists.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/9235/abu_sayyaf_group_philippines_islamist_separatists.html).

<sup>6</sup> Rommel C. Banlaoi, "Youth as Victims and Perpetrators of Terrorism : The Philippine Case," speech delivered at the International Conference on Youth and Terrorism organised by the Ministry of Information in collaboration with the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Feb 26, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM) (Philippines), Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism, 8 July 2010, <http://www.janes.com/articles/Janes-World-Insurgency-and-Terrorism/Rajah-Solaiman-Movement-RSM-Philippines.html>.

to have conducted the Superferry 14 bombing on 27 February 2004, the worst maritime terrorist attack to-date. It is significant to note that the alleged perpetrator of the act was Redento Cain Dellosa, who was only in his mid-20 during the incident.<sup>8</sup>

In Iraq, insurgent groups have been accused of paying between USD 50 to USD 100 to teenagers to plant an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), shoot a mortar or fire a machine gun at coalition troops.<sup>9</sup> Though young, these teenagers have proved to be not only a dangerous threat but a security dilemma to the coalition forces.

The extent of the involvement of youths in terrorists activities was further highlighted by the MI5 Chief in UK, Mr. Jonathan Evans, when he stated that “extremists were methodically and intentionally targeting young people and children in the UK,” and that groups like Al-Qaeda were recruiting children as young as 15 years old to wage “a deliberate campaign of terror” in Britain. In his first speech since taking over the MI5, Mr. Evans warned that extremists were “radicalising, indoctrinating and grooming young, vulnerable people to carry out acts of terrorism” and that urgent action was required on the part of the UK Government “to protect its children from exploitation by violent extremists.”<sup>10</sup>

The youth involvement in the current conflict is also sadly seen in their presence as detainees in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Camp Iguana is a detention facility dedicated to juvenile detainees aged between 13 and 15 years<sup>11</sup> while those between the ages of 16 and 18 years old are held at the adult facility, Camp X-Ray.<sup>12</sup>

How have we reached this juncture?

The reality is that while terrorist groups have extensive hard power, they also have considerable soft power, which they have proved to be adept in using. In turbulent times, these groups attract youths by exploiting their vulnerabilities and providing them with a sense of identity,

---

<sup>8</sup> Rommel C. Banlaoi, “Youth as Victims and Perpetrators of Terrorism: The Philippine Case.”

<sup>9</sup> Edward O’ Connell and Cheryl Benard, *The Myth of Martyrdom: Young People and the Insurgency in Iraq in A Future for the Young : Options for Helping Middle Eastern Youth Escape the Trap of Radicalization*, edited by Cheryl Benard, RAND National Security Research Division, September 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Philip Johnston, “MI5: Al-Qaeda Recruiting U.K. Children for Terror,” <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1568363/MI5-Al-Qaeda-recruiting-UK-children-for-terror.html>, 7 November 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Guantanamo Bay – Camp Delta, GlobalSecurity.org, [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/guantanamo-bay\\_delta.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/guantanamo-bay_delta.htm).

<sup>12</sup> P.W. Singer, “Too Young to Kill,” *Human Rights*, (Newshouse News Service, Brookings Institution, 9 January 2005, [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/0109humanrights\\_singer.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2005/0109humanrights_singer.aspx)).



belonging and cohesiveness. Over a period of time, in a troubled environment, these youth begins to define their identity with that of the group and its struggle.

### *Why terrorism?*

When there are few opportunities to break out of the cycle of poverty, perceived or real, injustice and despair, there is a greater tolerance for violence. Terrorists groups have used these circumstances to their advantage by identifying and offering youths what they are lacking or by even offering them a ‘way out’ of their situation through martyrdom.<sup>13</sup> In a study on approximately 600 young Guantanamo Bay detainees<sup>14</sup> (young being defined as those between the ages of 18 and 25), unemployment motivated a number of Gulf State detainees, particularly skilled and semi-skilled labourers and terrorism was seen as a viable ‘alternative employment.’

This coupled with the fact that the opportunistic strategy of the terrorists of preying on vulnerable and susceptible youths has borne tremendous fruit in communities where there is a real or perceived injustice. Hence, these groups are not looked upon as perpetrators of violence but rather as fighters struggling against a tyrannical enemy. Against this backdrop, it is perhaps understandable why youths that do join such groups are perceived to be heroic and courageous – a narrative that is actively constructed, propagated and disseminated by terrorist groups. It is also significant to note, that poverty and despair are not the only factors that draw youths into extremist groups. Membership into such groups also provide youths with a sense of identity, prestige or pride, acceptance, responsibility, outlets for frustration and excitement which appeal to all youths, regardless of economic or social status.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Recruitment and Radicalisation of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups, Homeland Security Institute, 23 April 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Sharon Curcio, *The Dark Side of Jihad : How Young Men Detained At Guantanamo Assess Their Experience in A Future for the Young: Options for Helping Middle Eastern Youth Escape the Trap of Radicalization*, edited by Cheryl Benard, RAND National Security Research Division, September 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Recruitment and Radicalisation of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups, Homeland Security Institute, 23 April 2009.

### *Secondary Trauma*

The creative and deceptive exploitation of the injustices that are happening worldwide by the terrorist groups for purposes of recruitment, the strategic blame which is then placed solely (and conveniently) on the enemy of the groups and the subsequent rallying cry to rise against the ‘enemy’ through the use of violence, while being simplistic is vividly and emotionally accepted by the youths as being the absolute truth. This three-step process not only captures the hearts and minds of youths who are in the middle of the conflict but has shown tremendous potential to attract and indoctrinate youths far removed from the struggle and conflict. This phenomenon of ‘secondary trauma’ is defined as a set of symptoms that parallel those of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)<sup>16</sup> which include hyperarousal symptoms such as feeling tense and/or having angry outbursts.<sup>17</sup> These sets of emotions could happen when an individual associates himself with victims of violence and as a result, over a period of time, identifies and feels the suffering and pain of the victim as his own. The Fort Hood incident, in which a US Army psychiatrist, Major Nidal Malik Hasan killed 12 people was said to have the possibility of being caused by secondary trauma.<sup>18</sup>

What is of significance is the manner in which secondary trauma has been the cause of violent conduct. No longer does an individual have to be in direct contact or close association with a victim before he or she feels their pain. With the advent of the digital age and globalisation – pain, anguish and misery happening in distant lands and even in different times, has been brought into our lives, vividly and graphically by the media in general and the Internet in particular. Through blogs, chat rooms and YouTube, the perceived or real injustices happening all around the world, has been condensed, edited, packaged and delivered to arouse a variety of feelings and emotions with the express purpose of eliciting sympathy or even active participation in violent action. This was seen in the case of a 23-year old Malaysian undergraduate, Muhammad Fadly Zainal Abidin who was arrested in Southern Thailand for allegedly attempting to steal a motorcycle to wage war against the Thai military. The final year

---

<sup>16</sup> Ted Bober and Cheryl Regehr, *Strategies for Reducing Secondary or Vicarious Trauma: Do They Work?* Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention Advance Access originally published online on December 30, 2005, Oxford University Press.

<sup>17</sup> *What are the Symptoms of PTSD?*, National Institute of Mental Health, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/what-are-the-symptoms-of-ptsd.shtml>.

<sup>18</sup> Tim McGirk, *Hasan’s Therapy : Could ‘Secondary Trauma’ Have Driven Him To Shooting*, [www.time.com](http://www.time.com), 7 November 2009.

mechanical engineering student had been convinced by a religious teacher, after seeing the video footage of the massacre in *Tak Bai* to slip into Southern Thailand to help Thai Muslims allegedly oppressed by the Thai Government.<sup>19</sup> This was similar to the case of a 22-year old British undergraduate who was shown videos of Muslims allegedly “suffering because of the west” which led her to be radicalised and wanting to be the first female British suicide bomber in order to make “the western world listen”.<sup>20</sup> In the earlier-mentioned study of young Guantanamo Bay detainees,<sup>21</sup> many had indicated the extensive use by their recruiters of visual displays and films of suffering women and children in refugee camps in Chechnya, Palestine and Afghanistan. These visual stimuli were used to generate anger as the seed for future violent conduct.

### *Why the Youth?*

Youths with no prior police records (or ‘clean skins’ as the Real IRA called them)<sup>22</sup> allow the terrorist group more operational freedom as the involvement of youths would reduce the likelihood of arrest of the more senior terrorist leaders. Such youths also have the added advantage of allaying suspicion on the part of the security and enforcement authorities. This could perhaps explain Al-Qaeda’s interest in western youths. Former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Michael Hayden observed that Al-Qaeda was actively seeking recruits among western youths for possible operations against western targets because of their familiarity with the language, culture and appearance<sup>23</sup> and who would therefore “not illicit any notice whatsoever from you if they were

---

<sup>19</sup> *Accidental ‘Jihadist’ tells his story*, Philip Golingai, The Star Online, Retrieved on 29 May 2009 at

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/2/28/focus/3367292&sec=focus>.

<sup>20</sup> Divya Talwar, Muslim women 'targeted by extremists' at UK universities, BBC Asian Network, 5 August 2010.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10855565>.

<sup>21</sup> Sharon Curcio, *The Dark Side of Jihad : How Young Men Detained At Guantanamo Assess Their Experience in A Future for the Young: Options for Helping Middle Eastern Youth Escape the Trap of Radicalization*, edited by Cheryl Benard, RAND National Security Research Division, September 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Evans and David Sharrock, *Renegade IRA groups co-ordinated Northern Ireland attacks*, The Times, March 11, 2009,

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article5884412.ece>.

<sup>23</sup> *Recruitment and Radicalisation of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups*, Homeland Security Institute, 23 April 2009.

standing next to you in the airport line.”<sup>24</sup> Al-Qaeda, who in the past have referred to children as the “new generation of Mujahidin”<sup>25</sup> has aggressively used this tactic when conducting suicide attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan as young people are not immediately suspected of being a suicide bomber.<sup>26</sup> This has increased the lethality of violence as young suicide bombers have been successful in circumventing security measures.<sup>27</sup> It is estimated that youths between 15 to 18 years old make up about 20 per cent of all suicide bombers.<sup>28</sup> Terrorist groups who have suffered losses in terms of their members often times are also forced to recruit youths as much of the adult population are simply too weary for conflict and are reluctant to continue the struggle. The Al-Qaeda of the Islamic *Maghreb* has countered the trend of diminishing adult recruits within the North African region by actively seeking out the next generation.<sup>29</sup>

Youths are also, at times, given more dangerous tasks on the assumption that if they are caught they would receive lighter sentences due to their age. There is also the possibility that youths and young adults are targeted because of the skills that they might possess as in the case of the *Jemaah Islamiyah* focusing on the recruitment of university students to ensure a cadre of educated and technically capable leaders for terrorist attacks.<sup>30</sup>

Youths are also important in ensuring continuity. *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA), the Basque separatist movement, which in the past was very selective in its recruitment, has been very active in seeking out new members from a younger demographic.<sup>31</sup> Its ability to regenerate itself

---

<sup>24</sup> Michael Hayden, Director Central Intelligence Agency, “Transcript of Remarks,” (Presented at the Atlantic Council, New York City, 13 November 2008), available from: [www.cia.gov/news-information/speechestestimony/Directors-remarks-at-the-atlantic-council.html](http://www.cia.gov/news-information/speechestestimony/Directors-remarks-at-the-atlantic-council.html).

<sup>25</sup> Rear Adm. Gregory Smith and Major General Mohammed al-Askari, Press Conference, (5 February 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Recruitment and Radicalisation of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups, Homeland Security Institute, 23 April 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Merle Kellerhals, “Using Children as Suicide Attackers Increases Sense of Barbarity,” *America.gov* (23 October 2007).

<sup>28</sup> Merle Kellerhals, “Suicide Terrorism on the Rise Worldwide,” *America.gov* (19 October 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Recruitment and Radicalisation of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups, Homeland Security Institute, 23 April 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Recruitment and Radicalisation of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups, Homeland Security Institute, 23 April 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Recruitment and Radicalisation of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups, Homeland Security Institute, 23 April 2009.

over time has been largely credited to its very own youth organisation, *Jarrai-Haika-Segi*.<sup>32</sup>

### *Where do They Get the Youths?*

Prison, ironically, provides a contributory environment for terrorist recruitment. They are said to be the breeding grounds for radicalisation and are ‘places of vulnerability’, which, due to the environment, produce ‘identity seekers’, ‘protection seekers’ and ‘rebels’ in greater numbers than in any other environment.<sup>33</sup> The American criminologist, Harvey Kushner, argued that Western prisons were one of the main recruitment grounds for Al-Qaeda,<sup>34</sup> while some have suggested that the ‘relatively lax practices’ in western prisons have been well exploited by the Al-Qaeda.<sup>35</sup> Matters are made worse in prisons when terrorists are not separated from the juvenile population. In the case of Pakistan, 92,000 prisoners share 41,000 prison places with little or no distinction being made between juvenile and adult or minor offenders, hardened criminals and politically motivated militants.<sup>36</sup> The extent of the problem in prisons was graphically illustrated by the Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, when he pointed out, that there were ‘more insurgents per square foot in corrections facilities than anywhere else in Afghanistan’.<sup>37</sup>

Hence, terror detainees who are not physically separated from other criminals and in particular the younger offenders have used the time

---

<sup>32</sup> Yonah Alexander, Michael Swetnam, Herbert Levine, *ETA: Profile of a Terrorist Group* (Ardsey, NY: Transnational Publishers Inc, 2001), 22.

<sup>33</sup> Peter R. Neumann, Prison and Terrorism – Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, <http://www.icsr.info/publications/papers/1277699166PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Harvey Kushner (with Bart Davis), *Holy War on the Home Front* (New York: Sentinel, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> Ian M. Cuthbertson, ‘Prisons and the Education of Terrorists’, *World Policy Journal*, 22 September 2004, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> Peter R. Neumann, Prison and Terrorism – Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, <http://www.icsr.info/publications/papers/1277699166PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> Gen. McChrystal, cited in Melisa Porges’ case study report on Afghanistan cited in Peter R. Neumann, Prison and Terrorism – Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, <http://www.icsr.info/publications/papers/1277699166PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf>.

and both physical and ideological space given, to recruit and indoctrinate potential youths into their groups. The youths in those circumstances are vulnerable and the support structure of family and friends is often time supplanted by these groups.

Religious institutions, preaching a skewed and misconstrued interpretation of a religion have the potential to capture the hearts, minds and imaginations of the young people. In most cases, recruiters would identify and target the more promising youth and pull them into a smaller setting where a more comprehensive indoctrination programme would be undertaken, without arousing the suspicions of the moderate members in the congregation.<sup>38</sup> Coupled with the actual injustices happening all around the world, these ‘men of God’ clinically exploit the minds and hearts of the youths into thinking that the only alternative left is that of violence. Having the advantage of ‘god’ on their side, these youths are manipulated into believing that they are actually struggling for a noble and worthy cause, with the assurance of victory.

Universities and institutions of higher learning are also being turned into recruiting pools for terrorists. Foreign students and lecturers from countries that are in conflict zones utilise lecture sessions to vividly describe the atrocities and injustices occurring in their respective countries and over a period of time mould their students into thinking that the ‘propaganda of the deed’ is the only recourse left. This problem is further compounded by local students going abroad to study but instead is being indoctrinated and radicalised. Not only are they ‘infected’ with such ideas but they ‘import’ these ideas to their local setting when they return home.

### *The Terrorist Use of the Internet in Reaching the Youth*

The Internet has been a useful tool particularly in reaching out to the young and has been a God-sent for the terrorist in overcoming their handicap to acquire and attract young new recruits. According to Bruce Hoffman, “virtually every terrorist group in the world today has its own Internet website and, in many instances, multiple sites in different languages with different messages tailored to specific audiences.”<sup>39</sup> While

---

<sup>38</sup> Recruitment and Radicalisation of School-Aged Youth by International Terrorist Groups, Homeland Security Institute, 23 April 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Zanini and Edwards, *The Networking of Terror in the Information Age*, p.43 in Bruce Hoffman’s testimony on *The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists* before the Permanent Select Committee in Intelligence, United States House of Representatives, 4 May 2006.

in the past, terrorists' indoctrination, recruitment and training relied heavily on physical meetings between recruits and recruiters which required time, coordination and travel, the Internet has bypassed this by providing connections quickly, easily, remotely and anonymously.<sup>40</sup> The role of the Internet as a 'radicalisation accelerant'<sup>41</sup> has significantly changed the way terrorists operate, for it has allowed them unprecedented scope and opportunity in developing and strengthening their *modus operandi*.

This has been made possible due to the simple fact that youths and the Internet in this day and age are so closely intertwined. Statistically, Internet usage among the youths has risen dramatically and the usage has evolved from a passive, individually-directed, information-seeking process (termed as Web 1.0) to an active, socially-connected, user-involved environment where youths interact, discuss, create and pass on content (termed as Web 2.0).<sup>42</sup> Besides the websites, other facilities on the net, ranging from e-mail, chat rooms, e-groups, forums, virtual message boards, all facilities frequently visited and used by youths, have also been increasingly used by terrorists as virtual training camps, providing an online forum for indoctrination and the distribution of terrorists' manuals, instructions and data.<sup>43</sup>

What is also disturbing is that the natural inclination of the current generation of young people to gravitate towards the Internet has been accurately anticipated and exploited by terrorist groups. How else can we explain the Taliban, who in the past punished people who owned television sets are now actively updating their websites numerous times a day? This dramatic change stems from the fact that they have realised the power and potential of the Internet. This urgency that terrorists place on the Internet was vividly seen when Abu Yahya al-Libi, a key leader of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, praised the "mujahidin on the information frontline" – the

---

<sup>40</sup> The Internet as a Terrorist Tool for Recruitment & Radicalisation of Youth, White Paper prepared for the US Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate, 24 April 2009,

[http://www.homelandsecurity.org/hsireports/Internet\\_Radicalization.pdf](http://www.homelandsecurity.org/hsireports/Internet_Radicalization.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, "Violent Islamist Extremism, The Internet, and the Home Grown Terrorist Threat" Majority & Minority Staff Report, 8 May 2008, p.11.

<sup>42</sup> The Internet as a Terrorist Tool for Recruitment & Radicalisation of Youth, White Paper prepared for the US Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate, 24 April 2009,

[http://www.homelandsecurity.org/hsireports/Internet\\_Radicalisation.pdf](http://www.homelandsecurity.org/hsireports/Internet_Radicalisation.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Gabriel Weimann, "Terrorist Dot Com: Using the Internet for Terrorist Recruitment and Mobilisation," in *The Making of a Terrorist, Vol. 1: Recruitment*, edited by James J.F. Forest (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2005).

site designers, bloggers, video editors and others who support the vast online presence of Al-Qaeda, saying, “May Allah bless you lions of the front, for by Allah, the fruits of your combined efforts – sound, video and text – are more severe for the infidels and their lackeys than the falling of rockets and missiles on their heads.”

The terrorist skilful ability to creatively utilise the Internet has enabled them to exponentially increase their potential reach and hence, we see a transition, by the terrorist, from the physical space to cyberspace<sup>44</sup>. In December 2007, the *as-Sahab*, Al-Qaeda’s multimedia arm<sup>45</sup> announced that Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al-Qaeda’s number two, would entertain questions from the general public posted on selected militant websites. His offer elicited more than 900 entries and in April 2008, Zawahiri responded to these queries in an audio statement accompanied with English and Arabic transcripts.

The late leader of the Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi’s strategy of videotaping the carnage in Iraq and then disseminating it as broadly as possible has been greatly enhanced with the advent of YouTube and blogs. The utilisation of the video camera as a ‘weapon of war’ in documenting graphically the struggle accompanied by the extensive use of this social networking site to publicise the conflict have led some to refer to the conflict in Iraq as the first ‘YouTube war.’<sup>46</sup> The Internet has also showed great potential in becoming the focal meeting point for terrorists all across the globe and has been said to be the next Afghanistan;<sup>47</sup> where social networking sites replace the battlefield as the venue to link up and to fight for a common cause.

Given this development, we can perhaps understand how young people, are being radicalised through the Internet without even having to physically meet other fellow terrorists. In Singapore, a 20-year-old national serviceman, Muhammad Fadil Abdul Hamid was arrested under the Singaporean Internal Security Act (ISA) for having contacted Anwar

---

<sup>44</sup> Steve Coll and Susan B. Glasser, “e-Qaeda from Afghanistan to the internet: Terrorists Turn to the Web as Base of Operations,” *Washington Post*, August 7, 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Audio Message from Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri Issued by as-Sahab Addressed to Muslims: “Set Out and Support Your Brothers in Somalia” – January 2007, SITE Institute, <http://counterterrorismblog.org/site-resources/images/SITE%20Institute%20-%2014-07%20-%20Zawahiri%20Audio%20Support%20Somali%20Brothers.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> Ana Marie Cox, “The You Tube War,” *Time*, July 19, 2006, <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1216501,00.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Aidan Kirby Winn and Vera L. Zakem, *Jihad.com 2.0: The New Social Media and the Changing Dynamics of Persuasion in Influence Warfare: How terrorists and Governments Fight to Shape Perceptions in a War of Ideas*, Edited by James J.F. Forest, Praeger Security International, 2009.



al-Awlaki, the radical United States-born preacher, and expressing interest in joining a militant movement operating in the Palestine territories, Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>48</sup> Awlaki, known as the ‘Bin Laden of the Internet’<sup>49</sup> has been said to have made numerous contacts with groups and individuals in the region and is also said to have inspired US Army Major Nidal Hasan who killed 13 people at Fort Hood in Texas in 2009. He was also reportedly to be in touch with two of the 9/11 hijackers and has been linked with Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who attempted the Christmas Day bombings in 2009.<sup>50</sup> It is pertinent to note that Awlaki’s global reach as seen in the cases above, has been solely due to the Internet.

While in the past, terrorists have used the Internet as the means to disseminate their rhetoric of hate, we now see that the Internet has extended its potential to include the actual identifying, nurturing and developing of a raw recruit into a fully-fledged terrorist. Hence, Internet radicalisation has been utilised as a means of self-radicalisation. This ‘computer screen to battlefield process,’ poses a grave threat and requires a paradigm shift in our efforts to counter terrorism.

### *Conclusion*

The ability of the terrorists to identify, indoctrinate, recruit and utilise youths for political violence has been both systematic and widespread. They have also demonstrated great sensitivity in crafting out their message to the youths and creativity in exploiting the various technological mediums in reaching out to them.

In this arena, the authorities are struggling to counter and curb the momentum that terrorists have garnered in winning over the youths. Hence, while terrorists are developing strategies to target and attract the youths, counter-terrorism efforts continue to focus on hard power as the central approach in dealing with this issue. Given this scenario, it is

---

<sup>48</sup> Mustafa Shafawi & Imelda Saad, Self-Radicalised 20-year old NSman Detained Under ISA, [channelnewsasia.com](http://channelnewsasia.com), 6 July 2010,

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/1067829/1/.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Aamer Madhani, Cleric al-Awlaki dubbed ‘bin Laden of the Internet’, USA Today, 25 August 2010,

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-08-25-1A\\_Awlaki25\\_CV\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-08-25-1A_Awlaki25_CV_N.htm).

<sup>50</sup> Kumar Ramakrishna, Self-Radicalisation and the Awlaki Connection, Eurasia Review – News and Analysis, 13 July 2010,

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/201007134929/self-radicalisation-and-the-awlaki-connection.html>.

imperative that the authorities seek to understand the dynamics between youth and terrorism. Among the areas that need particular research and attention are the profiles of youths that have joined terrorist groups and the reasons and motivational factors for them to do so, the radicalisation and indoctrination process employed by terrorists in recruiting the youths and a review of existing programmes in countering the vulnerability of youths towards extremism and terrorism. It is only by understanding the realities on the ground and taking proactive, preventive and resourceful steps, will we be able to meet and address this challenge.

It is quite possible, that the next battlefield in the struggle against terrorism will not take place on a physical plane but in the mental and emotional domains of the youth. Unless, we win the hearts and minds of these young people, not only will we not garner their support but we will also be confronted with the distinct possibility of facing them as our future adversaries.



# **THE LESSER EVIL: POLITICAL ETHICS IN THE AGE OF TERROR**

*By Michael Ignatieff  
Princeton University Press, 170 pages*

*Reviewed by Sharmini Ann Nathan*

*The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in the Age of Terror* by Michael Ignatieff raises an important question of whether the fight against terrorism involves the principle of an eye for an eye. Democracies that place the preservation of human rights and human dignity on the highest pedestal regardless of the situation are forced to compromise on their democratic values in the fight against terrorism. Ignatieff uses the term the lesser evil to describe the battle by democracies to deal with the greater evil in the age of terror. Democracies like America are faced with the dilemma of preserving state security without compromising human security and the rights of individuals even though they are suspected terrorists. Chapter one asserts that the mechanism of checks and balances within the organs of state in a democracy prevents the abuse of power by government bodies and intelligence agencies as these institutions are constantly held accountable and answerable for their actions. Acts of violation of human rights are subjected to institutional accountability. Ignatieff asserts that violation of human rights and civil liberties can only be condoned in a democracy if it can be justified to the public under conditions of extreme necessity and emergency to ensure the survival of the democratic state itself.

The chapter on “*The Ethics of Emergency*” discusses the temporary breach of the rule of law during times of emergency as police powers are increased in the event of terrorist attacks. Furthermore, the increase of police powers in times of danger and the exercise of authority of the executive arm of government is shrouded in secrecy. The author states that nation-states have the tendency to overreact to terrorist threats without properly assessing the threat at hand.

Chapter three on “*The Weaknesses of the Strong*” raises a critical point that in the post-9/11 era and the hasty enactment of laws such as the U.S. Patriot Act and Canada’s Bill C.36 give the police extensive powers and their actions failed to be closely monitored by the judiciary. However, Ignatieff states that if adequate checks and balances on police powers and intelligence agencies are in place, and if police actions during times of emergency are constantly subjected to the test of adversarial justification, the values and the principles of democracies will not be compromised.

Ignatieff in chapter four on “*The Strength of the Weak*” differentiates acts of violation of rights by states and acts of violence by terrorist groups. States are more often than not held accountable for their acts of violence and torture while terrorists are not subjected to institutional accountability for their violent deeds. Moreover the distinction between acts of violence by the state and terrorist attacks by terrorist groups such as *Jemaah Islamiyah* and the Abu Sayyaf group is that states resort to violence as a last resort when all other methods and means in dealing with a terrorist in extracting crucial information on terrorist operations fail. Terrorists, on the other hand, resort to launching terrorist attacks as their first resort.

The fifth chapter on “*The Temptations of Nihilism*” examines the dangers involved in the “end justifies the means” approach to counter terrorist violence. Ignatieff argues that the higher morality that each side (terrorist and counter-terrorist) wishes to uphold invariably could lead to a wanton disregard to the extent of causing harm to human life. The author takes a closer look at the consequences of the use of torture on individuals to extract information in the wake of terrorist attacks. The tortured are often scarred by the pain and psychological damage inflicted on them during the interrogation process and they often find it difficult to go back to their normal lives once they are released from police custody. In this chapter, the author also illustrates cases where individuals who were tortured whilst in custody have committed suicide as they find it difficult to live with the pain of having been tortured. The torturer, on the other hand, has to live with the guilt of having inflicted physical abuse and torture on individuals whilst in police custody, in the name of preservation of national security. The author also claims that many individuals who have been tortured have to be killed to destroy the evidence of torture. He suggests that the justification of the killings of individuals involved in terrorist attacks can lead to the death of democracy itself.

The final chapter on “*Liberty and Armageddon*” discusses the possibility of terrorists using the freedom and the liberty given to them by their country to acquire weapons of mass destruction. It raises an important question about how democracies will deal with this eventuality and whether the methods adopted to deal with these cases will be a success or failure.

### *Comments*

Ignatieff gives us a comprehensive understanding of the dilemma faced by democracies in balancing state security with individual liberty.

The author looks at the issue from a historical, philosophical, legal and democratic perspective. However, the author takes the position that the war against terror and the hard approaches that states like the United States have taken to counter-terrorism *is* the lesser evil. The author describes measures taken by states as necessary although it may be evil in its nature. Indeed, all counter-terrorism measures are essentially aimed at protecting the lives of citizens and upholding public security with the best of intentions although there may be some undesirable consequences from those measures adopted. However these consequences though inevitable may serve as a deterrent to individuals who resort to terrorism and acts of violence. To describe counter-terrorism measures as evil portrays the state as the enemy which may not necessarily be the case.

The author is also equally cognizant that increased security measures taken by states can threaten the rights and liberties of the citizens. However, security and liberty should not be viewed as two different or opposing values as security is a prerequisite for an individual to be free to exercise their rights. In times of emergency and with the rise of terrorist attacks in the post-9/11 era, increased security measures – and the temporary increase in police powers that will prevent terrorist attacks in the longer term – seem like a small price to pay for society to enjoy the normal freedom and to be given the assurance of being free from terrorist attacks. Yet, Ignatieff concludes on a cautious note that the paradox of the response of democracies to the threat of terrorism is *not* the terrorism itself, but the reaction to that threat i.e. if the democratic state's reaction is overly excessive, it can produce the undesired or unanticipated consequence of destroying the democratic state.

In conclusion, this book exposes the real security dilemmas faced by the modern, democratic nation-state in addressing the issue of terrorism which has now been globalised by modern technology, transport and communication systems. It provides a thought-provoking analysis of democratic states that are better equipped to win the “force of argument” rather than the “force of arms” in the war against terror. Ignatieff's arguments aimed at balancing democracy with security are situated within a comprehensive analytical framework that exposes the critical options available to states in formulating and implementing counter-terrorism strategies to protect individual freedom and national security. This “freedom versus security” dilemma is intriguingly captured by the “politics of necessity” debate. However, critics of Ignatieff's ‘politics of necessity’ justification for the state's sometimes unrestrained use of violence against terrorists argue that he mixes up the morality of means with the morality of ends: “what is genuinely ‘necessary’ to preserving rights is not a necessary or lesser *evil*, it is not an *evil* at all”. Nevertheless,

in practice, ultimately, the test of success for the democratic state in fighting terrorism obviously lies in its ability to make a proper evaluation of the threat faced, and to employ the coercive power at its command through its inherent strength of democratic restraint and prudence in promoting the public interest.

# **WOMEN AS TERRORISTS: MOTHERS, RECRUITERS, AND MARTYRS**

*By R. Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly  
Praeger Security International, 140 pages*

*Reviewed by Kennimrod Sariburaja*

*Women as Terrorists: Mothers, Recruiters and Martyrs* by R. Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly is an attempt to understand and examine the involvement of women in terrorist activities. The authors, throughout the book emphasise that the involvement of women in terrorism is a topic that requires an in-depth study, especially in terms of their motivation and drive to join terrorist groups. The role of women in terrorist activities is important as they not only play a supporting role by handling the logistics, recruiting new members into terrorist groups, being political representatives, but also acting as operational leaders and mission operatives particularly as suicide bombers. This book is divided into seven chapters that describe the significant role of women as terrorists.

The first chapter, *Terrorist Motivations and Group Dynamics* explains political, economic and social grievances as the key motivating factors for women to join terrorist groups. The authors also assert that the social network that a woman is a part of can also persuade a woman to become a terrorist. Even leaders in terrorist groups who are predominantly men see recruiting women as vital in achieving their objectives. In the second chapter, *Women as Logisticians* takes a closer look at how terrorist organisations have used women as logisticians in both their basic operations as well as during the execution of a terrorist attack. The authors explain the importance of women as couriers, protectors and decoys in terrorist activities. Women terrorists are often used to courier money and weapons to various terrorist cells. They can also provide shelter and medical assistance to their terrorist colleagues and at times even act as a decoy to distract security officers while executing their terrorist operations.

The third chapter, *Women as Recruiters* examines the role of women as recruiters in terrorist groups. The authors argue that although the majority of terrorists are recruited by men, women also undertake the part in attracting new logisticians, financiers and suicide bombers. Two basic patterns of terrorist recruitment are by recruiting members from their own family circle as well as a selective process by seeking out specific individuals with skills that can be of benefit to the terrorists' future operations. The authors then explicate that women terrorists act as



facilitators, propagandist and historical conscience in their role as recruiters. As a recruiter, a woman plays a part in identifying potential new members, attracting new sympathisers and inciting violence by telling stories of past grievances to the public.

In the fourth chapter, *Women as Suicide Bombers* analyses the role of women as suicide bombers. In this chapter the authors reveal two important parts with regard to the role of women as suicide bombers which are their motivation and deployment. The authors attest the differences of motivations between female suicide bombers and their male counterparts through the evidence of different experiences between the two sexes. As for the deployment of women as suicide bombers there is always a dilemma faced by terrorist groups. There are groups who find it an advantage while others feel that it could lead to a moral setback. In chapter five, *Women as Operational Leaders and Fighters* focuses on how terrorist groups use women as operational leaders and fighters. The authors examine that in many occasions women first enter terrorist groups as logisticians before becoming group operational leaders or fighters. As operational leaders and fighters, women terrorists would be involved directly in the planning and executing of terrorist attacks.

In chapter six, *Women as Political Vanguard*s the authors verify that some women terrorists have successfully climbed the ladder of hierarchy in a terrorist group and played a role as strategic thinkers that can be influential in determining the decision-making process within the group. Women also play symbolic roles in societies, thus can easily garner the support and invoke the sympathy of the society. In the final chapter, *Women as Terrorists: Past, Present and Future* the authors state that women's role in modern terrorism have expanded from merely playing a supporting role into becoming a major player. This has led the authors to the conclusion that women's role as terrorists remain vital in the future.

### *Comments*

There is a tendency to understate the role of women as terrorists. Counter-terrorism experts, policymakers, academicians and journalists sometimes underestimate the supporting role played by women as terrorists. Cragin and Daly have given readers a very comprehensive understanding of the varied roles played by terrorist female operatives. The authors have asserted that women have always been a part of terrorist groups regardless of whether they function as logisticians, suicide bombers or strategic thinkers.

The authors have emphasised the role of women as suicide bombers. However, for certain terrorist groups there is indeed a strong aversion in using women as suicide bombers. The reluctance of some terrorist groups in using women suicide bombers can be measured not only by gender disparity but also due to the impact and implication created after the attacks. As a result, regardless of using female suicide bombers or male suicide bombers, the level of catastrophe is still the same. For that reason, some terrorist groups feel that the consequence of using male as opposed to women suicide bombers is far more beneficial as men are more likely to be hero-worshipped rather than women.

In addition, although it is undeniable that using women suicide bombers can sometimes give a tactical advantage for terrorist groups in the launch of their attack, then again, the operational value of using women as suicide bombers is questionable since there is a growing trend of male suicide bombers disguising as women while carrying out their attacks. For example in 2002, a Taliban male suicide bomber masqueraded as a woman and detonated himself at a checkpoint in eastern Afghanistan's Khost province. This shows that there are situations when the terrorists do not necessarily need to use a female suicide bomber to gain an advantage in their attacks as male suicide bombers can easily disguise themselves as women to deceive the security personnel.

In conclusion, the authors affirmed their points by providing numerous examples to illustrate their arguments and have indeed highlighted the issues of the various roles that women play in terrorist activities as well as how their involvement in terrorist activities is likely to increase in the future. However, counter-terrorism efforts by intelligence agencies should not solely focus on eliminating the involvement of women in terrorist activities, rather it should also look into the other motivating factors that result in an increased participation of society as a whole in terrorist activities.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Bilveer Singh**, a Singaporean, received his MA and PhD in International Relations from the Australian National University. He has been teaching at the National University of Singapore for the past 30 years. Presently, a Visiting Fellow at the Department of International Relations, Australian National University, he will assume the position of Head, Centre for Excellence on National Security, S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University beginning in 2011. He works mainly on regional security issues focusing on ASEAN security, Great Powers in Southeast Asia as well as security issues relating to Indonesia and Singapore. Of late, he has been working on the state of Islamist Terrorism in Southeast Asia. His two latest works include: *The Talibanisation of Southeast Asia - Losing the War on Terror to Islamist Extremists* (Prager: 2008); and *Papua: Geopolitics and the Quest for Nationhood* (Transaction: 2009).

**Zahri Yunos** is currently the Chief Operating Officer of CyberSecurity Malaysia. Zahri holds a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia and a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science from Fairleigh Dickinson University, New Jersey, United States. He is a certified Associate Business Continuity Professional (ABCP) by the Disaster Recovery Institute International (DRII), USA. He has been awarded Senior Information Security Professional Honoree at the Fourth Annual (IS2)<sup>2</sup> Asia Pacific Information Security Leadership Achievement Programme in July 2010 by the International Information System Security Certification Consortium (ISC)<sup>2</sup>, USA. He is currently pursuing his PhD in Information Security at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia.

**Syahrul Hafidz Suid** is currently the Strategic Policy Research Executive at CyberSecurity Malaysia. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Multimedia Technology from Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia. He is currently pursuing a Master of Science Degree in Information Security at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia.

**Adam D Tyson** is a visiting lecturer at Universiti Utara Malaysia, and Deputy Director of the Centre for International Affairs and Cooperation, Universiti Utara Malaysia. He obtained his BA (Hons) in Political Science from Brock University, Canada, and both his MA and Ph.D. from the University of Leeds, UK. Dr. Tyson specialises in the Southeast Asian region and conducts research on a wide range of topics including decentralisation, indigenous revivalism, counter-terrorism, democratisation, security sector reform, and political culture. His latest book entitled *Decentralisation and Adat Revivalism in Indonesia: The Politics of Becoming Indigenous* was published by Routledge in 2010.

**H.E. Ambassador Bill Paterson** is the Australian Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism. He was Australia's Ambassador to Thailand from 2004-2008. He has extensive experience in international strategic and security policy, politico military affairs, intelligence and regional issues as a senior government official, including as head of DFAT's Anti-Terrorism Task Force immediately after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In 2002-03 he was Head of the Australian Government's Iraq Task Force. He has also served as Head of the International Security Division and the South-East Asia Division in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra. Mr. Paterson served as Chief of Staff and Principal Adviser to the Foreign Minister (2000) and as Assistant Secretary for Asia, APEC and Trade Policy in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (1998-99). Overseas, Mr. Paterson has served in Dhaka, Baghdad, Vienna, Washington, Tokyo and Bangkok. Mr. Paterson has a Bachelor of Arts Degree with honours from the University of Melbourne. He was awarded the Public Service Medal in 2004 and the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal in 2005. He is married with three children.

**Elina Noor** is the Assistant Director, Foreign Policy and Security Studies at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia. She previously worked in various capacities on cyber threat issues, US relations with the Muslim world, as well as weapons of mass destruction terrorism. Elina was educated at Oxford University, the London School of Economics, and Georgetown University.

**Kumar Ramakrishna** is an Associate Professor and Head of the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore. He was Head (Studies) of the School from 2003-2006. He obtained a First Class (Honors) in Political Science from the National University of Singapore in 1989 and a Masters Degree in Defence Studies from the University of New South Wales in 1992. He went on to secure his PhD in History from Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, University of London, in 1999. His current research interests include British propaganda in the Malayan Emergency; propaganda theory and practice; history of strategic thought; and counter-terrorism with a focus on radicalisation. He was an Asia Foundation (US) Freeman Fellow in June 2002 and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington, D.C., from April to June 2003. He was also an Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Special Visitor in March 2003. In 2008 he was appointed as Senior Advisor to the Trusted Information Network on Extremism and Transnational Crime in Southeast Asia and Australia, a joint project of The Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., and The Lowy Institute for International Policy in Sydney, Australia.

Ramakrishna has been a frequent speaker on counter-terrorism before local and international audiences, a regular media commentator on the issue – most recently on the Mas Selamat Kastari affair – and published in numerous internationally refereed journals. He has co-edited two well-received books on counter-terrorism, *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies* (2002) as well as *After Bali: The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia* (2004). His major book, *Emergency Propaganda: The Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds, 1948-1958*, (2002) was described by the *International History Review* as “required reading for historians of Malaya, and for those whose task is to counter insurgents, guerrillas, and terrorists”. His edited volume, *Freedom News: The Untold Story of the Communist Underground Publication*, was published by RSIS, with the co-operation of the Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs, in 2008. His most recent book, *Radical Pathways: Understanding Muslim Radicalisation in Indonesia* (2009) was identified by Choice in October 2009 as a “recommended” reading.

He is a member of the Singapore Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) Resource Panel on Home Affairs and Law; member of the Board of Trustees, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, member

of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) Academy, and Executive Committee Member of the Political Science Association (Singapore). Most recently he was inducted into the Executive Board of the Council for Asian Transnational Threats Research, a US-led, 12-country network of think tanks and research institutions engaged in terrorism and transnational threats research.

**Carl Ungerer** is the Director of the National Security Programme at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) – an independent think tank funded by the Australian government. Prior to joining ASPI in January 2008, he lectured in international relations at the University of Queensland. His previous appointments include: Foreign Affairs and National Security Advisor to the Leader of the Australian Labor Party (2002-2004), senior Strategic Analyst in the Office of National Assessments (1999-2002) and a policy officer with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (1993-99). Dr. Ungerer has published widely on foreign policy and national security issues, including his most recent book, *Australian Foreign Policy in the Age of Terror* (edited 2008).

**Ruhanas Harun** is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Strategic Studies, National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), and fellow at the Institute of West Asian Studies, (IKRAB), UKM. Prior to joining NDUM in 2010, she lectured at the National University of Malaysia (UKM) and the University of Malaya, where she has served as Head of Department of Strategic Studies and International Relations of both universities. She researches, lectures and publishes on the theme of *foreign policy and national security*. Apart from making her mark as an expert on Malaysia's national security, Ruhanas Harun has also distinguished herself as Malaysia's leading expert on Indochina, specifically on Vietnam. Her current research interests include Malaysia-Indonesia relations, international security issues and peace-building process in post conflict countries.

**Thomas Koruth Samuel** is the Director of Research and Publications with the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), which is under the purview of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia. Prior to that, he was a volunteer Health Officer with World Vision East Timor. He has a certificate in Terrorism Studies from St. Andrews

University, Scotland (2007), an honours degree in Biomedical Technology (2000) and a Masters Degree in Strategic and Defence Studies (2005) from the University of Malaya, Malaysia. His main areas of research include the dynamics of terrorism, conflict resolution and international security. He lectures frequently on terrorism and counter-terrorism and has written several articles, papers and a monograph entitled *Aviation Security in Malaysia*. He is married with one daughter.

**Sharmini Ann Nathan** is a Research Officer at the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism (SEARCCT). She graduated with a BA degree in International Relations and Political Science from the University of Tasmania, Australia (2008) and a BA (Hons) Degree in International Studies from the University of Adelaide (2009). She is currently doing her research on Cyber Terrorism.

**Kennimrod Sariburaja** is a Research Officer at the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT). Prior to that, he had launched his career as a Project Management Consultant in the Training and Event Management Industry. He graduated with B.A. (Hons) majoring in Southeast Asia Studies with a minor in International and Strategic Studies from the University of Malaya. He is currently carrying out research on Terrorist Organisations in Southeast Asia as well as pursuing a Master's Degree in Strategic and Defence Studies at the University of Malaya.





