THE EVOLUTION OF JIHADIST RADICALIZATION IN ASIA

EDITED BY GABRIELE IACOVINO AND FRANCESCA MANENTI

CENTRO STUDI
INTERNAZIONALI

EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR
DEMOCRACY

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Introduction

Nearly four years since Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the establishment of the "Caliphate" in Iraq by ISIS or Daesh, jihadist terrorism has become an increasingly horizontal phenomenon. ISIS represents the embodiment of a utopian dream – the reconstruction of a mythological "golden age" ruled by the strictest interpretation of Islam, as conveniently adapted and reinterpreted to fit the group's radical ideology. ISIS has therefore constructed a very powerful tool: a palace of dreams, rooted in a strong politico-religious ideological framework, that exploits real or perceived grievances of people living a social and personal malaise. Abandoned the elitist requisites previously demanded by al-Qaeda, in these years Daesh has been able to set itself as a reference both for those groups of insurgents who needed a new bulwark which to give prestige to their cause with and for individuals looking for a sense to give to their life.

Although often overshadowed by the turbulent scenarios in the Middle East, Asia is also strongly affected by the new wave of jihadist radicalization. Known as the historic shelter of al-Qaeda's leadership since the second half of the 1990s, in fact, Asia has always been a fertile ground for the branching of the network connected to international terrorism. The osmotic collaboration between al-Qaeda and the different groups of insurgency in South Asia, on one hand, and training and financial support offered to the realities in Southeast Asia, on the other, have made Asian theatres a crucial front in the fight against terrorism for the International Community.

In this framework, the turnover between al-Qaeda and Daesh in the leadership of international terrorism, the reflection of their competition on national insurgencies and the effects caused by the spread inside the region of the new model of jihadism offered by the Caliphate have affected also Asia. As the heterogeneity of the different national environments and the differences in the affiliation to al-Qaeda manifested within each countries, the evolution of the jihadist phenomenon is not producing a homogeneous response across the region.

This paper aims at analyzing how this evolution is occurring, which consequences could create for the national and regional stability and how States in Asia are facing to this challenge. It is divided in three parts. The first part aims at tracing the evolution

from al-Qaeda to Daesh, presenting the Caliphate model and analyzing how it changed the concept of jihadism itself. Starting from the basic principles of jihadist ideology, this section will underline how differently the two groups used it to shape their struggle to consolidate their power. It focuses on the reasons why this evolution has shaped and affected the international terrorism in the last four years. This section ends analyzing the plausible future of jihadist international terrorism, in the light of Daesh's defeated in Middle East and the possible resurgence of al-Qaeda.

The second part presents the jihadist panorama in Asia. It presents the competition between al-Qaeda and Daesh in Asian strongholds, recalling the Qaedist rooting in the area and the rising sensibilities for IS' propaganda. Then, the section focuses on the regional declination of the current jihadism. Through the experience of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia this section intends to underline how the jihadist rhetoric can be adapted to the different social and institutional context and how it affects national security.

The third and final part proposes a framework of policy recommendations for Italy and the European Union in order to create partnerships between Europe and Asian institutions involved in the efforts of de-radicalization and counter-terrorism.

The Evolution of Jihadi Terrorism from al-Qaeda to Daesh

By Francesco Farinelli (EFD - European Foundation for Democracy)

Abstract

This article addresses the theme of contemporary jihadist terrorism and its historical development from al-Qaeda to Daesh. After an introduction defining the key terms and concepts of 'jihadist terrorism', the article continues with two paragraphs on the birth of al-Qaeda and the subsequent arrival on the scene of the self-proclaimed Islamic State. The first part focuses on the main historical stages that led Osama Bin Laden to create the Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK) and al-Qaeda in the context of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, highlighting the strategic changes that characterized al-Qaeda terrorist activity up until 2001. The second part focuses on the birth of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), its transformation into the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), and its separation from al-Qaeda under the leadership of Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, highlighting the similarities and differences between the two terrorist organizations. The article concludes with some considerations on the phenomenon of jihadist terrorism in Europe, reflecting on possible preventative measures which can be implemented against the evolving jihadist threat.

Introduction: defining *jihadi terrorism*

Discussing 'jihadist terrorism' means linking two terms that require some preliminary clarification, given that the United Nations has not yet reached a legally-binding definition of 'terrorism' and that the adjective 'jihadist' and the Arabic noun 'jihād' are wrapped up in a jumble of different interpretations.

In 2004, the *United Nation's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change* submitted a report in which it proposed using the term 'terrorism' to refer to any action [...] that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population or to impose a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.[1]

This definition agrees with what is commonly accepted in the academic sphere, as it identifies civilians and non-combatants as the primary targets of terrorist attacks.[2]

The Arabic word jihād, present in the sacred book of Islam, instead indicates a struggle, the fulfilment of an effort to reach an end and in turn comes from the verb *jāhada* which, literally, means 'accomplishing the Jihād'.[3] That verb, followed by the words *fi sabil Allah* (in the way of God), generally means "to fight in the name of God".[4] However, given the existence of a wide variety of interpretations of Islamic texts (the Qur'an, Sunnah, legal opinions of the four major schools of Sunni law...), there are many disagreements about its meaning.

In the Qur'an and in the reports (*Hadith*) on the words and actions of Prophet Mohammed, it is possible to trace the term Jihād understood as both a verbal effort, a nonviolent dialogue with non-believers (related to the period in which Mohammed resided in Mecca), and as armed military action (coinciding with his transfer to Medina and the years of battles for the conquest of Mecca).

Some classical and modern Muslim thinkers identify at least four different types of jihād: jihād by means of the heart and soul (*jihad bin nafs / qalb*) which some scholars define as "great jihād" and which refers to an inner struggle against evil and against the basest instincts; jihād by means of tongue and pen (*jihad bil lisan*) whose purpose is to spread the word of Islam; jihād by hand (*jihad bil yad*) which refers to action against social injustice through political action and protest; jihād by the sword (*jihad bis saif*), in other words armed conflict.[5]

The last category, jihād by means of the sword, is the one that has given rise to the neologism 'Jihadism' to describe terrorist acts by armed groups that, as correctly noted by Paolo Maggiolini (2016), justify their work based on readings and interpretations of the theological content of Islam.[6]

The question that still polarises the public debate between those who emphasize the peaceful content of the jihād and those who point out the violent side is whether it is a struggle and a bloody war against infidels, unbelievers and apostates, or an internal struggle, a battle against the self to get closer to God. The most obvious answer is that both of these meanings exist in Islamic texts and that the twentieth century and the new millennium have shown how this interpretative openness has allowed organized

political groups to take up arms under the auspices of the Qur'anic text. Take the example of the killing of civilians and innocents that characterizes terrorist activity and forms one of the points of contact between the definition of terrorism and the jihadist activity of groups such as al-Qaeda or Daesh. On the one hand, it is possible to identify Islamic writings and teachings against suicide and the killing of civilians in battle; on the other hand, the fusion of political projects with some radical fringes of Islam, such as Khomenism, Salafism and Wahhabism, has allowed a well-organized network to render religious and political data inextricable, giving rise to horrible crimes against civilians and the defenseless in the name of returning to an alleged original purity in religious practice. If the interpretative openness of Islamic texts allows for the development of potentially infinite positions and readings of the same texts, such hermeneutic breadth fatally collides with the impossibility of establishing universally valid codes of conduct. This absence has often been exploited by extremist ideologies that leave no room for tolerance of what differs from them, all engaged in the definition of a single "true" Islam to the detriment of other schools of thought.

'Jihadist terrorism' can thus be defined as a consequence of the integration of radical Islamist political ideologies with the religious datum of the term jihād, which, as we have seen, remains open to violent interpretations, used as a justification for the terrorist act. In order to avoid conflating and identifying the religious datum with the terrorist act, Europol in the Te-SAT 2016 gave a precise definition of jihadist terrorism, and also stated that this formula should replace the one used previously "terrorism of religious inspiration" and even earlier "Islamist terrorism":

Jihadist terrorism is perpetrated by individuals, groups, networks or organisations that evoke their very particular interpretation of Islam to justify their actions.[7]

Undoubtedly, jihadist terrorism has aggressively imposed itself on the West's attention following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States when, under the direction of al-Qaeda, three planes hit the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Nevertheless to go to the origins of the phenomenon that gave birth to al-Qaeda, to Daesh and thus to the contemporary jihadist terrorism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we must go back at least another twenty years, when the Cold War unfolded in the Middle Eastern theater and when another Arabic word began to become known even outside it: *mujahideen*, he who practices the jihād.

Mujahideen and the birth of al-Qaeda

The main theater of al-Qaeda's appearance on the scene is Afghanistan. The year that forms its historical introduction is 1979. On the 24th of December, the USSR invaded Kabul giving rise to a decade-long occupation aimed at the growth of the Soviet economy and the expansion of Communist influence towards the countries of the Middle East. In April 1954, US President Eisenhower pronounced the "*falling dominoes*" *principle* according to which if a strategically important state in a given geographic area was conquered by Communism, neighboring states would also follow suit, dropping like domino tiles. This Soviet move, however, did not find the United States unprepared, which in fact saw the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan as an opportunity to destabilize the superpower.

After the President of the Afghan Republic Mohammed Daud Khan was assassinated in 1978 following the April Revolution, initiated by the philo-Soviet PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan), the United States began to look with particular attention at the Afghan theater. On July 3, 1979, according to the words of former US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter signed the first directive to provide help to those opposed to Kabul's philo-Soviet regime.[8] The Afghan guerrillas, known as *mujahideen* and often translated as "fighters for the faith" thus received weapons and funding to counter the PDPA and when the party began to crumble, Leonid Brežnev sent in Soviet troops.

The immediate consequence of the invasion by the USSR was the enormous expansion of resistance to the communist regime, now directed at an invading foreign army. The Soviets began a fierce repression of civilians in the areas most suspected of supporting rebels and millions fled to Pakistan, the main country of asylum, where the city of Peshawar hosted the headquarters of rebel groups. [9] The origins of al-Qaeda must be sought precisely in this massive increase in the number of mujahideen, as tens of thousands of Muslim volunteers traveled from various countries to Pakistan, to participate in the fight against the invading enemy.[10]

Starting in 1981, with the election of President Reagan, US aid to the Afghan *mujahideen* increased considerably, as did that coming from Saudi Arabia[11] which had every reason to shift the jihadist target from apostate regimes to the Soviet invaders;

in 1979 Saudi forces had to bloodily suppress the occupation of the Mecca mosque by an armed group that wanted to overthrow the Sa'ud regime, accused of not being truly Islamic.[12]

According to Daniel Byman's analysis, the Arab *foreign* fighters were instead supported economically by private donors and the non-governmental Islamic charity sector. Understandably, Washington did not have much interest in encouraging young, poorly-qualified combatants with little knowledge of Afghan languages and territory. The problem, in fact, was not recruiting other soldiers in addition to the Afghans, but their lack of military equipment and training.[13]

Among the Foreign fighters were Abdullah Azzam and Osama Bin Laden. The former, a Palestinian Arab linked to the Muslim Brotherhood Islamist group, became the ideological leader of the struggle against the Soviets and in 1984 issued a *fatwa* (a religious decree) entitled "Defense of the Muslim Lands". Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi citizen from a wealthy family, had been a student of Professor Azzam at the University of Jeddah. Together, they founded the MAK (Maktab al-Khidmat), an organisation that was meant to provide food, shelter and combat training for the volunteers. Immediately showing great interest in ideological propaganda, in that same year (1984) MAK published a magazine called *Al Jihad* where it exalted the heroism of the *mujahideen* and the role of Jihãd as a religious duty[14].

Even more than the magazine, it was the Battle of Jaji in 1987, in which Azzam and Bin Laden also participated, which played a prominent role in the propaganda of the deeds of the warriors of the faith, making the Saudi fighter a symbol of the Muslim warrior who opposes the Soviet superpower.[15]

The following year, during the August meeting in Peshawar, Bin Laden adopted the principles conceived by radical thinkers of the Muslim Brotherhood's panoply such as Azzam and Sayyid Qutb. With the aim of expanding the work initiated by MAK - extending the scope of action outside of Afghanistan as well - and unifying jihadist movements to make them more effective, he officially declared the birth of the terrorist organisation called al-Qaeda (literally "the base"), whose organizational core would form a vanguard movement of limited size.[16]

The invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR, having become a sort of Vietnam for the

Soviet Union, ended in 1989 with the withdrawal of the last troops in February. Afghanistan was now a devastated country whose agricultural economy had been destroyed by the Soviet bombings. The civil war between the PDPA and the mujahideen went on until 1992 with the victory of the latter and the proclamation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. In that same year, Azzam was assassinated and, in Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, an Islamist general who will play a role in the continuation of al-Qaeda's story, came to power.

Bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia to which he offered the help of his militants after Saddam Hussein's Iraq had threatened Riyadh and invaded Quwait in August 1990. The Saudi King Fahd instead chose to ask for help from the US, which would earn Bin Laden's accusation of apostasy against the Sa'ud.

1991 marks al-Qaeda's first act of international terrorism, with the attempted assassination of the former King of Afghanistan Zahir Shah in Rome. The following year, Bin Laden was expelled from Saudi Arabia and, along with his second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, sought refuge in Sudan, where the Islamic National Front of Hassan al-Turabi operated. From there he tried to attract new militants and organise terrorist attacks such as the failed attempt against Egyptian President Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1996, who was deemed guilty of being allied with the United States. Bordering Egypt, General al-Bashir's Sudan grew less tolerant of the Saudi's presence in its territory, and Bin Laden was forced to return to Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban who, victorious in the civil war, gave rise in 1996 to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan that controlled much of the country.

Beginning in 1996, al-Qaeda changed its strategic priority: no longer the nearby enemy (apostate Islamic regimes) but the distant enemy, the foreigner who occupied the Muslim lands. Bin Laden 's 1996 fatwa, called Muslims to the war against the United States and Israel, a goal to be achieved through the organization and funding of mujahideen all over the world.

Until 1998, al-Qaeda's attack strategy was focused on providing support for local terrorists. After the *fatwa* published in that same year - which stated that "The resolution to kill Americans and their allies, both civilians and soldiers, is an individual duty for every Muslim, who can carry it out in every country where it is possible to do

so"[17] -, al-Qaeda began to act firsthand. On August 7, bombings against US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya (224 dead) bear the organizational signature of Bin Laden and the founding core of al-Qaeda[18]. They were followed by the suicide attack on USS Cole destroyer in 2000 (17 dead) and failed attempts at attacking US embassies in Rome and Paris in 2001.

2001 was the year when the strategy to hit the far-away enemy obtained its greatest success with the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, causing nearly 3,000 deaths. Despite the fact that the US response against al-Qaeda was very decisive, with the invasion of Afghanistan - the organization's main place of refuge - and the removal of the Taliban regime, the al-Qaeda attacks continued. Among the most immediate and blood-shedding were the 2002 attack on the Djerba synagogue (21 victims), the one on Madrid trains in 2004 (more than 190 victims) and the London public transit in July 2005 (52 victims).[19]

From al-Qaeda to Daesh: continuity and differences

If 1979 can be considered the year when the basis for al-Qaeda's birth was established, 2004 can be taken as a key year for the birth of the so-called Islamic State. In northwest Iraq, the Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi led a Sunni jihadist terrorist group called the "Group of Monotheism and Jihad", which had two main goals: fighting against the American entry into Iraq which took place in 2003 and combatting Shi'ite Muslims to the point of extermination. Bin Laden saw in him the opportunity to use a new leader to expand the jihadist network on the condition that he accepted his authority. Thus al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was born. Soon, however, Bin Laden realised that al-Zarqawi was more interested in annihilating Shiite Muslims than fighting the "far-off enemy" of America, and Bin Laden also condemned the massacre al-Zarqawi was carrying out.[20]

Al-Zarqawi died in 2006 following an American raid and AQI merged with other small groups until it assumed the name of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) towards the end of the same year under the leadership of a new emir, Abu Omar al Baghdadi who also ended up being the victim of an American attack in 2010 south of Tikrit. It was then that Abu Bakr al Baghdadi became the new ISI leader. The following year, Ayman al-

Zawahiri, having become number one in al-Qaeda after Osama bin Laden's death, urged the intervention of Iraqi jihadists in Syria following the outbreak of civil conflict. Baghdadi sent a small group of fighters who gave birth to the organisation called "Jabhat al-Nusra ". In 2013, however, it refused to still be considered part of the Baghdadi's ISI, invoking al-Zawahiri's intervention to gain its independence from the Iraqi cell. To lighten the situation, al-Zawahiri ruled that the ISI was considered the official affiliate of Al-Qaeda in Iraq wihle Jabhat al-Nusra was al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria. Baghdadi did not accept the deal and began fighting Jabhat al-Nusra to subjugate him. This was when he changed his organisation's name to "Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham" (ISIS) or "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL). In February of the following year, Zawahiri declared that ISIS was no longer a branch of al-Qaeda.[21] Finally, in 2014, the group changed its name once again to "Islamic State" (IS) to avoid imposing geographical limits on its expansion, and Abu Bakr al Baghdadi proclaimed himself Caliph, a position vacant since 1924[22], when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk abolished the institution of the caliphate. In that same year, al-Qaeda could count 5 major affiliates: al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria.[23]

Compared to al-Qaeda and its yearning for the creation of an Islamic state on the basis of Qutb and Mawdudi's thinking, the IS - or Daesh in its Arabic acronym used in a derogatory sense - has really chosen to focus its strategy on the creation of a so-called Caliphate. Daesh does not consider itself a vanguard whose small nucleus can inspire and direct other jihadist organizations but rather as a true State in the process of expansion. Although it encourages lone wolves to hit the enemy in their countries of origin, that is a secondary aspect of its strategy that comes after Abu Bakr al Baghdadi's main motto: *baquiya wa tatamadad* ("endure and expand").[24] This expansion is not, as in al-Zawahiri's line of thinking, linked first and foremost to the broadening of consensus and shared ideology. For the so-called Islamic state these aspects become results and not preconditions for territorial expansion gained by force. This also gives Daesh greater economic resources than those of al-Qaeda. Control over territory allows the jihadist organization to collect taxes and earn money on Syrian and Iraqi oil resources through the black market.

What is most shared by Daesh and al-Qaeda, albeit with some significant differences, are basically two aspects: propaganda and the figure of the leader at the organization's centre. With regard to the first point, careful use of media is a common denominator of both organizations. Al-Qaeda soon began to transmit its declarations through audio-visual recordings on the web, the use of faxes and magazines, first in print and then online. The internet was particularly important for al-Qaida after September 11 when, following attacks by the United States, the organization splintered into several small groups. Daesh has further refined the techniques of media propaganda, especially through greater digital proselytism through social media. In choosing, like al-Qaeda, to use the English language to reach the widest audience possible, it has also developed sophisticated video editing techniques and opted to differentiate digital content according to its target: men or women, adults or the very young, Muslims or non-Muslims. Their communication is capable of also adapting itself according to the size of the audience to which it is addressed: local, regional or global. The inhabitants of the so-called Islamic State, Islamic majority countries, and finally the West in fact receive different, targeted messages.

From a structural point of view, al-Qaeda and Daesh are both based on a hierarchical network that sees the leader figure as the central fulcrum for the many branches of power. Al-Qaeda, however, compared to Daesh, has become a less uniform and structured group since 2001 from an organizational point of view.[25] While Daesh has a vice-leader in Syria and one in Iraq, as well as governors and officers on the ground, al-Qaeda appears more tied to an image of rules, reference points, and methodologies where the solid pyramid structure of the years when its base was Afghanistan has been progressively lost.

Final Considerations: jihadist terrorism in Europe

Confirming the increased propaganda capacity of jihadist groups, in June 2016, one could count around 4,000 EU citizens who departed to join terrorist organizations in theaters of war such as Iraq or Syria.[26] At the same time, from 2015 to date, Europe and North America have been hit by an unprecedented number of terrorist attacks carried out on the basis of jihadist ideologies.[27] The three numerical peaks reached by jihadist attacks which took place in Europe from 1995 to present confirm that they

were coinciding with the participation of European countries in military action against countries with a strong jihadist presence: Algeria (1995) Iraq (2003-2004), Syria (since 2011).[28]

As recently observed in the work of Vidino, Marone and Entemann (2017), despite radical ideology forming the common denominator for the 51 acts of jihadist terrorism since the birth of the so-called Caliphate in North America and Europe, it remains practically impossible to establish a universally valid terrorist profile. The wide variety of people involved in the attacks and the fact that 73% of them were citizens of the country where they committed the attack[29] illustrates the fundamental importance for Western societies of providing interventions aimed at preventing radicalization in schools, in prisons and in any other contexts in which social, economic and cultural factors could create fertile ground for such ideologies to take root.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that militarily defeating a terrorist group does not necessarily mean the conditions for its possible rebirth have also been eliminated. After the withdrawal of the USSR in 1989, Afghanistan was dropped into an inevitable civil war that was the perfect ground for the development of the Jihadist phenomenon. In countries where religious minorities are harassed, a whole series of problems is likewise triggered which serve as a prelude to violent ideologies taking root. Defeating jihadist terrorism is a goal that cannot give up on a long-term vision.[30]

The Future of International Jihadi Terrorism

By Gabriele Iacovino (Ce.S.I. – Centre for International Studies)

Abstract

The paper focuses on the possible evolution of jihadism after the defeat of Daesh in Iraq and Syria. It analyzes how the so called Islamic States (IS) can try to reshape its organization, both in its enclaves in Iraq as well as in the other scenarios where it has spread so far, and the effects this transformation can have on social and sectarian environments. Moreover, the analysis will underline the importance that al-Qaeda is going to have in the future of the international jihadist panorama. Indeed, even if in the last years the lack of charisma and popularity of its leadership has brought the group to lose its premiership as the symbol of jihadism, al-Qaeda's appeal could significantly be boosted by the new role entrusted to Osama Bin Laden's heir: Hamza Bin Laden.

Since 9/11 international jihadism has evolved enormously over the years, changing and adopting tactics and languages that were unconceivable before. Obviously, such an evolution was determined by a series of factors linked to social, political and technological processes, that didn't depend purely on the jihadist ideology, but which were used and which represented the scenario where the movement advanced, once become global. The advent of the Islamic State (IS or Daesh) undoubtedly has had a disruptive effect on this path and represented the sum of all these factors. After having taken control of large parts of territory between two states, Iraq and Syria, and destroying therefore the concept of border, Daesh has become a magnet of radicalization in the heart of the Middle East. Indeed, thousands of people came from the most disparate areas of the globe with the aim of fighting in the ranks of a "State" whose goal was the construction of a new Islamic society inside a modern Caliphate. Not just soldiers, but engineers, doctors, teachers and workers who were the driving force behind a new radicalizing message that overshadowed the myth of al-Qaeda.

The movement created by Osama Bin Laden has seen its role as a polar star of global jihadism to become blurred. However, it has endured, thanks to the experience of being able to hide among the folds of a war that has weakened the movement, but

never defeated it. This diarchy in the universe of global jihadism has produced local phenomena that cannot be entirely subjected to neither of the two groups, but that nevertheless pose a serious threat to regional and international security. However, this "local jihadisms" present a common feature: the priority that the various leaderships assign to their groups' local strengthening, resulting in a territorial control that has had only few examples in the past.

Especially since the Arab Spring, in addition to the evolution of jihadism a more general exponential increase in extremist movements has taken place in an historical phase that saw political leadership in great difficulty. In several countries, in fact, the questioning of national authorities has been linked not only to their lack of representativeness, but also to the research of identity that never ceased in large parts of the so called "greater Middle East". Probably, the most problematic factor in understanding what will be the jihadist world after the defeat of the Islamic State is the following: the increasingly territorial characterization of movements is not only the result of a search for power, but also a response to an identity need which would become an even greater problem to eradicate in the future.

Over the years, the reasons that pushed the mujahideen to join Osama bin Laden in the war against the Soviet Army in Afghanistan have been significantly different from those of thousands of people, which went to fight in Syria in the ranks of Daesh or Jabhat al-Nusra. The numbers of foreign fighters who went to fight their jihad in the various "generations" changed as well. The exponential increase was mainly due to the fact that the mujahideen returning home have always been a driving force to radicalize new individuals. Moreover, every "mobilization"[1] has been faster than the previous ones as not only traveling but also the spread of news has become easier compared to the past. Even the number of foreign fighters' countries of origin has changed further. In Afghanistan, the vast majority of mujahideen were composed of the "Arab-Afghans" from the Gulf, a case which then no longer occurred.

Indeed, over the years the Gulf has been proportionally an increasingly narrow recruitment area, as proven by the fact that in the ranks of Daesh there were significantly more Tunisians than Saudis. At the same time, the number of North Africans has drastically increased: one example is the jihad fought against the forces of the international coalition in Iraq after the fall of the Saddam regime. As far as

Daesh is concerned, the new development has been represented by the huge number of Central Asian and European fighters, which has led to a strong increase in the threat in the countries of origin[2]. As jihadism is an ideology that spreads both by emulation and by teaching, as previously mentioned, foreign fighters who fought on the ground are one of the main means to disseminate the radicalizing message once back home (although this can also happen while they are abroad, through contacts with the family or acquaintances). This is the reason why it's so difficult to undertake a process of demobilization, but also to interrupt the facilitation or the support that they can provide to the new generations of fighters.

If Daesh is the result of an evolution that starts from al-Qaeda, the issue is what will happen now that the Islamic State has been defeated militarily and has lost the territorial control, that had made it the fulcrum of jihadism. The "retreat into the desert" (*inhiyaz ila al-sahra*), i.e. the choice by IS' leadership to hide and wait for better times, is now underway. The jihadist phenomenon in Iraq would not be new to such a situation, having the then Islamic State of Iraq (later name of al-Qaeda in Iraq after the death of Zarqawi) already chosen to reorganize thanks to the tribal support of large social sectors of Anbar (Iraq's western Sunni majority province). This choice allows the group to survive the defeat with an inevitable restructuring under a different "physical form", affecting relatively, at least for the moment, the radicalizing narrative. In fact, the propaganda that refers to Daesh remains on the web, which makes the group still a threat element, even though, not at the same potential that it had reached between 2015 and 2016. Moreover, in its reconstruction IS could continue to exploit Sunni's sectarian dissatisfaction against Shi'ism. From this point of view, the rhetoric of the movement would be facilitated by two orders of factors. First, by the deeply sectarianism of the central government in Baghdad. Although Prime Minister Abadi tried to distance himself from his predecessor Maliki, the role played by militias of Popular Mobilization in the fight against Daesh gives these Shia formations (which maintain a close relationship of command and control with Teheran's Pasdaran) a political dividend which the Iraqi Prime Minister will hardly be able to fix a quota on. Secondly, the increase in Iranian influence over the whole region and the expansion of the presence on the ground not only of proxies but of the same Force Qods, are an undoubted multiplier of the sectarian rhetoric that a group like Daesh can use. If Sunni countries' governmental authorities are not able to fight,

or at least to limit, Iranian influences and meddling, Daesh's call could have an easy game to find new life in a regionalist antagonism that is difficult to manage.

Furthermore, a group relocation, by exploiting the connections created within the leadership over the last three years, cannot be ruled out. Daesh, like al-Qaeda before, had regional ramifications linked almost directly to the central group. These realities were born as result of internal struggles inside some realities of jihadism in certain countries. In fact, with its creation, Daesh has given expression to new generations of jihadists who, without going to Syria to fight, have created a local branch of the group and that without Daesh would remain under their different leadership, in groups close to al-Qaeda. Daesh, therefore, becomes the possibility of a generational change. An example of this is Libya, where the local Islamic State originated from a complex mix both of young jihadists who had escaped from the Derna group, historical expression of the Libyan movement, a forge of ideology for Central al-Qaeda as well as for AQMI (al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb), and exponents of the old Gaddafi's regime who had not found a place neither in the faction of Tripoli nor in that of Tobruk. Libya indeed could be the scenario where IS' leadership might think of repositioning itself to continue its Caliphate project. However, despite Libya has those factors of instability and power vacuum that Daesh has been able to exploit so well in Iraq and Syria, it has social characteristics that at present represent more a limit than an opportunity for Daesh. Firstly the tribal composition of the country that hardly leaves room for maneuver to "foreigners". Secondly, the very presence of a jihadist tradition so much sedimented, as Derna's, leaves Daesh with less room for action, both from the doctrinal and operational point of view.

The stage of international jihadism, however, will not depend exclusively on what will be the future of Daesh. On the other side, there is al-Qaeda. The group not only suffered the death of its charismatic leader, but also saw that generational transition discussed before, suffering its negative effects and not managing to clear off this transition. At least that was the feeling transmitted by the explosive dialectic of Daesh. However, when analyzing the data, the current reality of al-Qaeda is quite different. In 2013, according to the statements of American officers, the estimated real number of al-Qaeda members present and active in Afghanistan and Pakistan was between 50 and 100 units. These numbers, repeatedly reiterated by former CIA

director Leon Panetta[3], clash with the factual reality of US military operations in the region. For example, in mid-October 2015, two US airstrikes on Shorabak training camps, in the Afghan province of Kandahar, killed about 150 al-Qaeda operatives, according to data released by Washington[4]. These numbers are not compatible with the previously reported estimates at all.

Moreover, despite the group's leadership has been less active than in the past, a network of formal affiliates and informal allies has evolved over time in various geographical areas. It's a symptomatic situation of the strategy always adopted by the movement. It's a pragmatic vision that pursues the long-term goal of creating a network across multiple countries, gathering support from local communities and increasingly expanding their operational capabilities. An example of this strategy is the activity of groups like Jabhat al-Nusra (now Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) in Syria.

For al-Qaeda, the creation of a global caliphate has always been a secondary objective. Land control has never been so important in the short-term strategy of the movement as for Daesh[5]. There have been cases in which al-Qaeda-linked groups took possession of large parts of countries such as Yemen, Somalia, Mali, but then left the field to stronger militias or State Armed Forces advancing. Partly by choice, partly because not ready enough to exercise prolonged control of the territory, these experiences led al-Qaeda to elaborate a doctrine that consider the territorial control only as the last step in the growth of the strength of the group or of its expressions. Moreover, over the years the Qaedist leadership has learned also the dangers connected to al-Qaeda's label. It is for this reason indeed that, after the experiences of AQMI or AQAP (al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula), it has preferred its regional affiliations not to be named after these denominations, as the "al-Qaeda" label has always meant greater attention by the International Community in contrasting group. Except for AQIS (al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, that has been more a marketing operation to try to stop the advance of Daesh in the central and southern Asia), the various groups belonging to international qaedism have assumed different names, entailing a sort of "fog" compared to the real affiliations of all these formations. It's the case of the name Ansar al-Sharia, used for the first time in Yemen in 2011 as an umbrella group inside which acted AQAP.

As mentioned earlier, Qaedist leadership's choice, resulting from the mistakes made in the past in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, but also in Iraq itself with the excesses that led to the "sacrifice" of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, is now to prefer a deep interconnection with the local fabric. The priorities are working with local insurgencies and pursuing in parallel religious programs through *dawa* (proselytism)[6]. Before the so-called "Arab Spring", which anyway demonstrated al-Qaeda's unpreparedness in reading social and political dynamics, many of the ideas the group is now applying had been discussed on official communication channels, but more with a theoretical and study basis. Only later a dawa, first on the web, and then practice on the territory occurred. However, this change was not fully grasped because of US authorities' stance, who continued to see al-Qaeda according to a post-September 11 lens, rather than in the light of the events of the Arab Spring. This misinterpretation exclusively discredited the group, which was considered defeated by popular protests and didn't note the lessons learned by the Qaedist leadership. In fact, the results of the Arab Spring, with the fall of regimes that had supported American counter-terrorism activities thanks to the control of the territory exercised by their security apparatus, created spaces for action and power gaps where Qaedist-style jihadist formations have been able to insert and to spread their social and cultural roots. In Tunisia (Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia), in Libya (Ansar al-Sharia in Libya), in Syria itself (Jabhat al-Nusra / Jabhat Fateh al-Sham / Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) this phenomenon occurred in a striking way. In Yemen, AQAP has exploited the complete instability in the country by taking control of large portions of the Hadramaut and Abyan provinces, despite the Emirates and Saudi troops (who fight in the country to support the forces loyal to President Hadi) have resumed control of Mukalla, albeit with ups and downs. AQMI has become the umbrella under which, and through which, all the formations active in the uncontrolled land crossing the countries of North Africa and Sahel work, exploiting the power vacuum as well as that weapons and smuggling market that the region has become[7]. Syria is the scenario where Abu Mohammad al-Jolani is trying to bring under the banner of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) the varied rebel front. Although, from a military point of view, Jolani's project cannot be judged right now, the operation of the multifaceted Qaedist formation in Idlib province and in other parts of northern Syria has changed the social environment, through marriages between foreign mujhadeen

and local women. It exposes a possible future scenario for the Syrian Sunni community, which remains, even today, without real representativeness.

Although al-Qaeda did not have the attractiveness of Daesh, none of the leaderships of al-Qaeda-affiliated groups changed their affiliation. Between 2013 and 2014, in addition to the media explosion of Daesh, a series of events have put a strain on the Qaedist universe. In Egypt, General al-Sisi seized power with a potential increase in the country's security capabilities; the Tunisian authorities have declared Ansar al-Sharia a terrorist group; General Haftar began his campaign against Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi; and France started Operation Serval in Mali. Despite all this, however, no group has rejected their *bayat* (loyalty oath) to Zawahiri. Taking advantage of the international attention towards Daesh, al-Qaeda has been able to bring its own project of rooting, by tying itself to the various insurgent realities spread throughout the territory and thus becoming indispensable for local actors. In addition, it has succeeded in evolving AQIS, born as an operation to curb the advance of Daesh in Asia, moving its operations from the AfPak region to countries such as India, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The goal of working with the local population is to increasingly transform itself from a restricted avant-garde organization into a mass movement. Unlike the Islamic State, which has wanted to create and administer its own Caliphate from the beginning, al-Qaeda's leadership has developed a strategy that first aims to lay the foundations through education and assistance and only later plans to institutionalize certain aspects of Islamic law. Moreover, another factor that has led to a diffusion of the network in recent years has been the choice to appear more moderate compared to Daesh. The attitude, for example, of HTS in Syria led the group to be defined as "moderate" by some Gulf actors. It could also lead to a "normalization" of relations given the desperate need of the Sunni front anti-Assad in finding guidance and external support.

To this series of factors, that describe not only al-Qaeda' survival but also its positioning to regain control of international jihadism given the defeat of Daesh, it has to consider the increasingly important growth of a prominent figure in the Qaedist leadership: Hamza bin Laden.

The favorite son of the "Sheik", appeared on the official media channels of al-Qaeda in August 2015 with an audio message introduced by Zawahiri, who introduced him as "a lion from the den of al-Qaeda" (also playing with the name Osama, which means, in fact, lion)[8]. Speaking "in the footsteps of his father," Hamza swore allegiance to the Taliban leadership, a circumstance that sets him apart from other members of al-Qaeda's shura. In fact, technically, Hamza should have done *bayat* to Zawahiri, the Emir of the organization and the only one able, to bind himself to the Taliban though his oath. In doing so, Hamza placed himself on a higher level, in direct descent from his father. To further underline the status of bin Laden's son, then, the name "Sheikh" arrived in the two audio statements published in May 2017, which places Hamza among the most important leaders of al-Qaeda at the time. Moreover, Hamza's reappearance occurred of greatest difficulty for Zawahiri. In fact, during the summer of 2015, while revealing the death of Mullah Omar, it was announced that Taliban's leader passed away in 2013, a year before the oath of loyalty with which Zawahiri had renewed the affiliation of al-Qaeda to the Taliban.

Whether the Qaedist leader had been unaware of the death of the Taliban leader or consciously made a *bayat* against a deceased (a very serious sin in Salafism), the figure of Zawahiri had been greatly weakened by circumstances. If we add to this the lack of leadership that has always accompanied the Egyptian doctor, we understand how the arrival of Hamza has given a new, exceptional lymph to the movement. Building on its origins (both parents come from important Saudi families), Hamza had the opportunity to forge stronger loyalty ties with the whole jihadist scene in the Gulf, both in terms of active members (Saudi mujahideen have never viewed highly an Egyptian leadership) and in terms of funding. It is no coincidence that one of the first targets identified by Hamza for the global jihad was a regime change in Riyadh, an argument always used by his father mainly to attract huge funding.

In addition, his own family history and the fact that he married the daughter of one of the leaders of al-Qaeda, who is one of the most surrounded by a mythical aura (that Abu Mohammed al-Masri who organized the attacks of Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in 1998 under his father), make Hamza automatically able to earn respect from all salafi-jihadists, even from members of Daesh. Unsurprisingly, the propaganda of the islamic state has never focused on the figure of bin Laden's son, but it concentrated more on

targeting Zawahiri. Hamza, for his part, has spoken repeatedly of the need for unity in the Syrian context among all the mujahideen, without ever attacking Daesh though. If to this we add the fact that no any of those members of the Islamic State who have denounced the "treacherous Zawahiri's al-Qaeda" has ever attacked the figure of Osama bin Laden[9], we can understand how much Hamza can be a unifying figure, one that, potentially, can also bring back members of Daesh under his authority. All this said, despite the fact that Baghdadi at the moment, doesn't seem keen on giving way to the "lion" Hamza. It is true that bin Laden's son has never had combat experiences, despite having looked for them since being released by the Iranian authorities, but this cannot be considered a weakness for the favorite son of the most famous jihadist in history, especially in a world where leadership follows bloodlines. His jihadist formation was curated in Iran by two figures of the caliber of Saif al-Adel and Abu Mohammed al-Masri[10], who forthe moment seem to have been freed by the Iranian authorities[11]. This circumstance potentially places them in direct contact with Hamza and, therefore, counselors of the new "lion" of al-Qaeda.

The priorities set by Hamza for al-Qaeda are clear in his messages. To begin, there is a deep focus on the battle for Idlib in Syria, seen as fundamental not only for "al-Sham" (the Levant), but for all of Islam. Then, there is the will to fight against "the international aggression of the Crusaders-Rafidhi" (Rafidhi is a derogatory term referring to the Shiites), an objective to exploit the profound sectarian confrontation in the region, both in operational terms (with the aim of attracting the mujahideen who left Daesh) and in financial terms (to channel donations from the Gulf to al-Qaeda). Finally, the attention paid by Hamza to the "oppressed men and women in refugee camps", well-aware of the experience of recruitment that al-Qaeda has already done in the past in refugee camps, as in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 80s[12]. These points are clear, and one should start working on these three issues to actively support a fight against al-Qaeda that, for now, is only limited to the counter-terrorism campaign in AfPak.

Furthermore, the threat that today may seem still contained in the mountains of the Pashtun tribal areas could come back also on Western agenda once again. Although al-Qaeda has not yet demonstrated the communicative force displayed by Daesh, the possibility that a young and charismatic figure like Hamza may become the new voice

that resonates in the ether of international jihadism cannot be ruled out. The radicalization and activations that took place in Europe, thanks to the magazines and videos of the Islamic State, could be replaced by the messages of the young Bin Laden. In his May 2017 message, the goals of jihad were not chosen randomly: starting from those who "sin" against Islam (like the editorial board of Charlie Hebdo), Hamza's threats have turned towards the Jewish interests, the United States and other NATO members and, ultimately, against Russia. Al-Qaeda's struggle against Daesh to control radicalization in "distant" scenarios from the Arab world is still ongoing. It will be necessary to see how and how much Hamza can replace the rhetoric and the captivating message of Baghdadi in contexts such as the European one and, also (and perhaps above all) the African one, where the identity building process takes on different connotations with respect to the Arab regional context. If Hamza will be able to replace the territoriality of Daesh with a conception of *Umma* more closely linked to the activism of the al-Qaedist ideology, it would be possible to observe a sizeable shift in the attention of radicalized persons towards al-Qaeda. With respect to Daesh, al-Qaeda's network structure and diffusion could engender serious problems in the fight against this threat.

The Competition between al-Qaeda and Daesh for the Asian Stronghold

by Francesca Manenti (Ce.S.I. – Centre for International Studies)

Abstract

This paper analyses the creation of al-Qaeda's network in Asia, considering its central structure in South Asia, its links across the region and the influence it had on the fundamentalist insurgency in other countries. Following, the analysis will focus on how this framework has changed since the reshaping of the international appeal and capabilities of al-Qaeda in favour of the so called Islamic States, founded by Abu Bakr al–Baghdadi in Iraq in 2014. Specific attention will be paid to South Asia, the stronghold par excellence of al-Qaeda's leadership, in order to explore the characteristics of the regional branch of Daesh (IS-Khorasan), the resistance to its expansion and the plausible consequences for the regional security.

Even though less considered by international attention than the Middle Eastern and the African scenario, the Asian continent has always been an important cradle for the rooting of jihadism. Indeed, in Central Asia as well as in South and Southeast Asia existed a resentment within parts of local communities inspired by a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, which refuse the authority of national governments. This feeling opened windows of opportunity for the jihadist ideology to spread and to find several allies all over the region. At first, the call of Jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan (1979-1989), alongside the mujahideen led by Osama Bin Laden, and then the relocation of the al-Qaeda leadership in the country, brought to the budding of several militant groups across Asia, which built a thick meshes network linked to the Qaedist organization. Some of them shared al-Qaeda's international project of uniting the Umma against the infidels; others made themselves available for the organization in terms of logistic and operational support and, in return for it, used the financial resources and the expertise of the organization to carry on their national agenda successfully.

The origin of al-Qaeda's network in Asia

The rooting of Bin Laden's organization in the Asian scenario started in 1996, when the Emir moved with his family and the inner circle of his most trusted men from Sudan to Afghanistan, the country where Osama gained the trust and the prestige among radical Islamists all over the world thanks to leading the Arabs mujahideen against the Soviets in the 80's. At this time, Afghanistan was unhinged by the Afghan Civil War, which followed the fall of Najibullah's regime in 1992, among provincial warlords and the Taliban. At first, Bin Laden found shelter in the eastern province of Nangarhar, the area that had been preserved the most by the chaos of war thanks to the local tribal leaders' interest in keeping businesses safe[1]. The area was well-known to Osama, because of the strategic importance of the cave complex situated in Tora Bora (Pashto for Black Cave), where he fought his first real battles in 1986 and built the road connecting the heights with the city of Jalalabad[2]. Here, the Sheik was hosted by Younis Khalis, the seventy-six years old warlord met a decade before who gave him the Najm al-Jihad (the Star of the Holy War) compound, to be used as barracks for the closest training camps and as a guesthouse. It's in Tora Bora that Bin Laden met the Taliban for the first time and started that relationship that will tie the two groups since the fall of the Islamic Emirates in 2001.

The relation between the Taliban and al-Qaeda has always been very peculiar. Indeed, even if it was perceived like a sort of ideological brotherhood, essentially the cooperation was based on a reciprocal pragmatic opportunism that brought both group to keep the link alive for as long as possible, but that didn't preserve it from strife and, at the end, from collisions. Driven to grant hospitality and protection to their hosts by their tribal ethical code (Pashtunwali)[3], nonetheless Taliban at first offered sanctuary to al-Qaeda provided that Bin Laden refrained from plotting against US, in order not to endanger the stability of the Islamic Emirate[4]. Even when Osama ignored this request, plotting the attack against the USS Cole[5] (October 2000) and then the 9/11, the existence of common enemies and therefore of points of common interest in their agenda let the two groups to carry on their cooperation. This has been blatant in the occasion of the assassination of Ahmad Shah Massoud, the leader of the afghan Norther Alliance and the most powerful warlord opposing Taliban's regime, who was killed by two al-Qaida's Tunisian suicide bombers on 9th September

2001. Bin laden decided to kill Massoud to eliminate US main ally in view of the 9/11 plot, but his death was unquestionable a big advantage for Taliban too, urging them to reciprocate the favor. Thanks to that, in a moment when the relations between the two leaders were at odds because of the terrorist attacks in New York, Taliban's Emir, Mullah Omar, considered out of question to hand over Bin Laden at any time.

Al-Qaeda, from its side, considered the agreement with the Taliban an inestimable opportunity to find an ideal land where not just to be sheltered but mainly to consolidate its organization and to carry on its agenda. Mullah Omar's offer gave the organization the possibility to be welcomed in the country that history had proved to be almost impregnable, to settle in and to make it the core of a possible international networks. Thanks to the Islamic Emirate's support, al-Qaeda was capable to set up several training camps and fundamentalist teaching schools[6] at disposal of thousands of militants coming from different part of Asia. This helped the organization to systematize the connections with extremist groups across the region. Through them, in fact, it could renovate the links with several Asian mujahideen who had fought with the Arabs during the war against the Soviet as well as with those national insurgent movements which were budding all over the continent during the '90. The prospect to be trained and to enter in contact with the rising star of international jihadism brought a lot of fighters to leave their country, in order to gain operational skills to be used at the service of their national agenda. This was the way in which al-Qaeda created first links with extremist realities in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Central Asia and that laid the foundations of that widespread network which granted it to always find logistical and operational support well far behind the geographical location of the leadership. These interconnections have been crucial for Bin Laden and his organization especially since October 2001, when US-led military operation Enduring Freedom started in Afghanistan and forced AQ cadres to escape beyond the border with Pakistan. The system was primarily composed by:

- Groups created and active in Pakistan, engaged in Kashmir insurgency against Indian Administration or in sectarian violence against Shia and non-Muslim minorities living inside the country. The Kashmir-focused realities, such as Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) and Harakat-ul-Mujahideen in (HuM), shared with AQ the ideological believe in pan-Islamism going hand in

hand with a radical interpretation of the Quran. Their members received training for a wide range of activities inside camps in Afghanistan, from basic weapons-handling to more specialized capabilities (such as escape and evasion, ambush preparation, long-range reconnaissance, the construction and placement of improvised explosive devices –IEDs, intelligence/counterintelligence, field communications and suicide attacks)[7]. LeT and LeM were crucial in helping AQ members and their family to enter the Federally Administrative Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan in 2001 and to hide them through the network of safe houses they had in the area. Among sectarian groups, the closest to AQ has always been Lashkar-e-Janghvi (LeJ), which in return of Qaedist financial resources and support offered its knowledge and control of criminal and smuggling networks as safety routes for logistical purpose. Members of LeJ assisted Khalid Shaik Mohammad in slaughtering the Washington Post journalist, David Pearl, in the outskirts of Karachi in February 2002.

- The radical Islamists insurgency in Bangladesh, especially linked to Harakat-ul-Jihad-Islami Bangladesh (HuJIB), which was allegedly created by Bangladeshi mujahideen returning from Afghanistan in 1992, and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), whose leader Sheik Abdur Rahman was with Bin Laden in Khost in 1998 for signing the fatwa against American troops' presence in the Arabian Peninsula[8]. The connection was reinforced during the Nineties by funds, disseminated through charity organization such as the Saudi-based al-Haramain Foundation, and by training activities, that took place inside afghan camps as well as in Bangladesh. The importance of this area in AQ's plan was proven in 2002 by the presence in the country of the then Bin Laden's right-hand man Ayman al-Zawahiri, in order to evaluate the possibility to set up there a new beachhead for exploiting those demands of spreading the jihadist project across the Indian Subcontinent, promoted by national extremist movements.

- The Islamic militants from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, grouped together in the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and focused on fighting the secular Uzbek government as well as establishing a transnational Caliphate in the region called Turkestan, extending from Caspian Sea to China's western

province of Xinjiang. The relation between IMU and AQ has been very pragmatic since the beginning, in 1996: in exchange for the operational and logistical support received from the jihadist trainers, that allowed the Central Asian group to significantly improve the range and the sophistication of its agenda, IMU granted AQ and its Taliban allies a safe network for smuggling and drug trafficking from Afghanistan toward central Asia. Since 2001, IMU has been committed exclusively in fighting the international troops in Afghanistan.

The osmotic network created by al-Qaeda in the region let the organization not just cope with the fall of the Taliban and the war in Afghanistan but also take advantages from the deterioration of security condition in the region to take hold more deeply in the hosting society. Indeed, after having moved from Afghanistan to Tribal Areas in Pakistan, the lack of control exercised by Pakistani authorities in this area[9], on one hand, and the abovementioned connections with local militants, on the other, allow al-Qaeda's leadership to settle in and to spread its tentacles further. Separated by the turbulent Afghan easternmost provinces (Kunar, Nangarhar, Paktia, Khost and Paktika) by that purely formal border known as Durand Line[10], FATA is populated by Pashtun people, which often belongs to the same tribe and even to the same families that live on the other side of the border. The inconsistency of the frontier, the harshness of the mountains and the homogeneity of social fabric made the Tribal Areas the perfect place where to find shelter and to organize the logistical chain and the command and control base for the warfare against US-coalition troops in Afghanistan. The integration of AQ militants inside FATA society (facilitated once again by precepts of *Pashtunwali*) commingled the jihadist ideology with the Deobandi and Salafi interpretation of Islam followed by local communities, thus further exacerbating the extremist claims of local insurgency. Like in a vicious circle, sheltering al-Qaeda became the bargaining chip for local militants to have the operational support and funding for their battle against the Pakistani government. The presence of AQ in the country resulted in the fact that all the groups operating in the region tried to reach out the organization and to build a pragmatic collaboration with it, in order to access funds and to be able to exploit the resources the Qaedist network had. If in other parts of the world the creation of local branches affiliated to AQ sometimes turned to more independent, or even secessionist, realities, in South Asia al-Qaeda's charisma and influence have always been too overwhelming to be put

aside. Even when the progressive radicalization of Pakistani insurgency reached its peak with the creation of the Therik-e-Taliban-Pakistan (TTP) in 2007, an umbrella group bringing together all the national Taliban factions to fight the central government, the new reality found the way to take advantages from AQ's network in the country. Born to carry on essentially a Pakistan-centric agenda, with time TTP developed also a more jihadist interest, resulting in terrorist attacks or plot against international targets, both in the region and abroad[11].

However, the spell around al-Qaeda and the strength of its name started to decrease after Osama Bin Laden's death, on the 2nd May 2011 after the US raid on Abbottabad compound. Since then, in fact, despite the network was weakened because of the losses caused by the war in Afghanistan and by US drone strikes, the presence of the organization had been relevant for other groups. If the operational capabilities that the organization has always been able to deploy during the years compensated the leadership's hiding and keeping a low profile, Sheik's demise exposed the vulnerability of an organization that since then had seemed untouchable and everlasting. The designation of Ayman al-Zawahiri as new Emir of the group didn't heal the wounds, as he has never been perceived as charismatic as Osama. In a moment when the ties among local branches and the central base were becoming looser and looser and the legitimacy of the leadership was being called into question, al-Qaeda eventually lost its prestige and international appeal.

The foundation of al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and the graft of Daesh

The international marginalization al-Qaeda has experienced since 2011 reached its peak three years later, when in June 2014, in Iraq the so called Islamic State (IS or Daesh) was founded. The Caliphate ruled by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi for the first time created a real alternative to AQ as global icon and promoter of jihadi terrorism. The government system, the innovative communicative campaign exploiting the new social media and the military strength shown through the territorial captures in Syria and in Iraq abruptly increased Daesh's popularity among extremist groups all over the world. Indeed, IS' asserting itself as the new reference point in the arena of global

terrorism led many fighters not just to join its lineup in the Middle East but also to look for an accepted affiliation with the Caliphate, to make the groups they belonged to shine with the light reflected by Daesh and to have access to its financial resources. Like it had already happened in the past with AQ, the more powerful Caliphate became the more militants group pledged of *bayat* to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

In a moment when it was losing the competition for the supremacy in the international jihadism, AQ's leadership tried to prevent Caliphate's message to enter its enclaves in South Asia. In order to achieve its goal, in September 2014, just four months after the establishment of IS in Iraq, Ayaman al-Zawahiri launched a new branch of the organization, called al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS o Qaedat al-Jihad). With an agenda focused purely on the imposition of sharia in the Indian sub-continent, the new group aims at bringing together fighters from India, Myanmar and Bangladesh and at establishing in these territories an Islamist government inspired by the Taliban's Islamic Emirate. The group's designated Emir is Asim Umar, an Indian jihadist ideologist who has long been close to the international terrorist network and member of the Pakistani Taliban Movement. Originally from Punjab, Umar studied in the two main Pakistani fundamentalist religious schools, the Jamia Uloom-e-Islamia of Karachi and the Darul Uloom Haqqania in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where he got in touch with the most radical environments in the country. The first contacts with the Qaedist network probably occurred during the years in which Umar was a member of HuJI, through which the new Emir of AQIS would have established strong links with the organization's cells inside Pakistani territory. Umar is known for his activity as an intellectual and an expert communicator more than as an operational leader: thanks to his commitment to the promotion of international jihad Umar won not only the title of chief of the propaganda activities for the TTP, but also that of al-Qaeda's "official in charge of Sharia" in Pakistan.

The appointment of an intellectual inspirer instead of an operative militant as leader of militancy seemed to address al-Qaeda's need of recovering, at least in part, the ability of fascinating people thorough the use of media, which had disappeared following the death of Bin Laden and was never regained due to the lack of a charismatic leader able to collect his legacy. Despite this attempt, since its

foundation, AQIS has seemed to be more able to tighten up the lines of that old generation of insurgents in Pakistan and Afghanistan, that have already collaborated with al-Qaeda in the past, rather than the youngest militants all over the region. Indeed, in these three years, the new Qaedist formation proved to still have a strong penetrating capacity inside the radical environments in both countries. The attempt of assaulting the US Zulfiqar frigate while stationing in Karachi Naval Dockyard, planned in September 2014 by member of AQIS in collaboration with five Pakistan Navy officers, and the presence of large training camps managed by AQIS in southern Afghan provinces of Kandahar and Zabul[12] have been just the most evident examples of Qaedist rooting in this scenario.

However, the military efforts put in place by US, Afghan and coalition Forces in Afghanistan as well as Pakistani Armed Forces in Pakistan to completely eradicate the network from each country are limiting AQIS' operative capabilities and opportunities. Indeed, in the last two years no attacks have been claimed by the group, which appears once again forced to hide in its traditional enclaves and to keep a low profile. Even the recent release of the new programmatic document[13], the Code of Conduct issued in July 2017, has been quietly received among international extremists' environment. The paper confirmed the special relation between AQIS and Taliban's Islamic Emirate, for which Qaedist militants are called to fight inside and outside Afghanistan. It also tried to spread AQIS' recruiting basin to India, Bangladesh and Myanmar, in order to have local cells for plotting against local authorities, Armed Forces as well as non-Muslim armed groups in AQ's name. However, the lack of a structured network in these areas on which to count on has made the Code a dead letter so far.

The difficulties encountered by AQ in reaffirming its status is partly caused by the spread of Daesh's propaganda in the region. Even though it's still marginal, a growing support for the Caliphate has been emerging in South Asia since 2015 and is being fed by two factors: the political discrepancies among the several groups which formed the insurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan; and the generational change through which radical environments are going through.

The tensions come up inside Pakistani Taliban and Afghan Taliban brought to the formation of the first group affiliated to Daesh in the first place. Indeed, in January

2015, a split group of Pakistani militants which had left the Tribal Areas to find shelter among afghan tribes in Nangarhar province, declared affiliation to IS and officially established the Islamic State Khorasan (ISK). The group was led by Hafiz Saeed Khan, former TTP commander for Orakzai Tribal Agency who left Pakistani Taliban after breaking up with the new leader, Fazlullah[14]. The new branch of IS established its hotbed in Mamand valley (in Achin district), in Deh Bala, Khot and Nazian districts in Nangarhar[15]province. Beyond the stronghold in the east of the country, in the first two years since its foundation the presence of cells affiliated to IS in the country was patchy and bound to those area under the influence of Afghan tribal leaders who were on the outs with Taliban's political leadership deriving from the Islamic Emirate, the so known Quetta Shura. Indeed, the first rumors of a plausible recruitment in favor of Daesh referred to the activity of Abdul Rauf Khadem, the former second-most important Taliban commander in Helmand who, marginalized by the apical positions inside the Shura, pledged allegiance to IS, before being killed by a drone strike in February 2015. Similarly, a group of mid-level Taliban commanders in Farah (West Afghanistan) and a handful of insurgents in Logar (East Afghanistan) emerged in the first months of 2015, before being eliminated by Taliban respectively in May and July of the same year. A separated mention deserves the presence of Daesh's cells in the Afghan capital, Kabul. Even if it would be wrong to state that the group can fully control the city, as dramatically the city is a Taliban's fighting ground as well, ISK succeeded in setting up three operative cells. The first one appears to be the heir of that created by al-Qaeda in 2009, whose members turned to IS before joining the Caliphate in Syria and then came back to Afghanistan. The second one is based in west Kabul and is formed by Salafi militants, who previously fought alongside the Taliban and then emancipated themselves and started independent operations. The third one is based in the residential northern part of the city and is composed by young people radicalized.

However, since 2016 and in particular after the death of Hafiz Saeed (whose intransigent attitude inspired by Salafism antagonized local communities), ISK has seemed to succeed in coopting some supports inside the country and therefore in spreading behind its eastern enclaves. In fact, this change led to a more pragmatic dialogue with those Taliban groups[16] still in crisis with the Quetta Shura, ready even to give up the hostility with Daesh's militants for finding a settlement that could be win-

win. It's for this reason that, while the Quetta Shura is disputing to ISK the control of the district where it settled in, other shuras have sometimes agreed on ceasefire and peaceful coexistence with jihadi militants, allowing them to spread across the country. However, its spreading didn't correspond to an effective increase of capabilities or a reinforcement of the group, but more to an internal split of the group itself. Indeed, in 2017, a succession struggle hit ISK as well. After Hafeez Saeed's successor having being killed by a drone strike, disagreements over the appointments as new Emir of the Pakistani former commander of LeT, Aslam Farooqi, led the group split in two factions, essentially based on the nationality of the militants: the Pakistani and the Afghan militants have followed Farooqi and are concentrated mainly in Nangarhar, Kunar and Zabul but are active in the southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan (as well as in some areas across the border in Pakistan); the Central Asians, belonging to IMU's faction Omar Ghazi Group (which pledged loyalty to IS), Afghan Tajiks and Afghan Uzbeks refused Farooqi leadership and supported instead the former IMU commander, Moawiya. They are active in the North, especially in Badakhshan and Jowzjan.

If Afghanistan is currently the scenario where the active presence of Daesh in the region is the most evident, the appeal of IS' propaganda fascinated radical groups well far behind the Durand Line, especially in countries where the lack of the Qaedist network has created empty spaces to be filled in. It was the case of India, where the charisma of the Caliphate advancing in the Middle East inspired extremist environments both to join the jihadist lines in Syria as well as to plan terrorist attacks against New Delhi's authorities in their own country. The radical panorama in India derived from the Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) the banned Islamist organization born in the '70s to oppose the secularization of Indian society and from which was probably created the Indian Mujahideen (IM) group, responsible for the terrorist attacks in Jaipur (Rajasthan) and Ahmedabad (Gujurat) in 2008. Even if already in 2012 tensions inside the IM brought to a split and to the foundation of the first jihadist Indian reality based outside the country, Ansar-ul-Tawhid (AuT), since 2014 any Indian extremist realities had never declared loyalty to an outsider organization. However, in October 2014, AuT pledged a *bayat* to Daesh and officially started the recruiting campaign for young militants, both to join the lines in Syria and to fight against New Delhi's authorities inside the country. In the last two years, the

Indian sympathizers of the jihadist Caliphate increased and more groups loyal to al-Baghdadi emerged, such as Junood-ul-Khilafa-Fil Hind, the current referent of Indian jihadists in Syria. Even though the number of Indian supporters is still low compared to those of other countries, it's important to underline that Daesh rhetoric and message has fascinated especially young people from some of the wealthiest areas of the country. Most of the sympathizers or recruiters identified by Indian authorities so far come from Maharashtra (19), Uttar Pradesh (15), Tamil Nadu (5), Karnataka (15), Gujarat (4), Kerala (37), Telangana (21)[17], which are among the first ten States of the Indian federation with the highest nominal GDP.

The trend registered in India highlights the general tendency of how Daesh's penetration is occurring across the urban areas of South Asia. On one hand, it attracts the new generation of jihadist militants, who have never had a direct contact with al-Qaeda in the past and therefore are not bonded to its leadership by any loyalty. They are eager to join or to be recognized by Daesh in order to give more standing to their fight against local authorities as well as to receive eventually money and support from the international network. On the other hand, the revolutionary model offered by IS goes past the traditional pair which combined radicalization with poverty or illiteracy and presents the jihadist message as a valuable offer, to be used for filling an identity gap or reinforcing a political cause. Daesh's ability to provide answers to political or existential demands loosened its message from the territorial Caliphate and made it a much more powerful recruiting instrument, able to survive and to be spread well behind the boundaries in Middle East. In a moment when IS has almost lost the control all over the territory, its message is the most striking tools at Daesh's disposal for continuing to spread in other parts of the world.

The efficacy of the communicative instruments used by the organization for its propaganda, mixing powerful images with high production skills and the instantaneous dissemination granted by new social media, catches up young people which look at the Caliphate as a new possibility to give a different and more satisfying significance to their lives. This combination is being declined in different ways, depending on the social and political condition of each areas. For instance, in Kashmir, a region which has been experiencing since more than twenty years of insurgency, the young militants taking charge of the fight against Indian

Administration have recently shown interest in IS and, even if there is not a stable footprint of the Caliphate in the region, rumors of a plausible connections are rising. Conversely in Pakistan or in Bangladesh, where AQ's network was deep and permeating, there are still pockets of militancy invulnerable to Daesh's appeal. However, it doesn't mean that they are completely impenetrable by its rhetoric. Indeed, the disaffection with governments or national authorities and the lack of occasions to be active part in political or public debate about issues is considered important but poorly managed, and is bringing more and more educated people to radicalized themselves, in order to use the jihadist terrorism as the most drastic political expression.

Conclusion

The evolution of jihadist extremism is affecting deeply South Asia. After more than twenty years of al-Qaeda settlement, the course it followed and IS' penetration in the region are generating new milieu of radicalization which can endanger further the security of the area. The long-time crisis in Afghanistan, the destabilizing activities of the Islamic insurgency and the generational replacement experienced by several militant groups are creating the ideal conditions for Daesh's expansion and problematizing the regional extremist panorama further. The interest of IS of spreading behind the now collapsed Caliphate in Middle East and AQ's will to regain the lost ground as point of reference for international terrorism can transform South Asia in a new scenario of the competition between the two jihadist organizations. Indeed, if since now the Qaedist leadership hasn't been able to catch up Daesh's ability in persuading the new generations of young extremists because of the lack of charisma of al-Zawahiri, an important turning point could be represented by the rise to the leadership of Hamza Bin Laden, the heir designated by Osama as his successor.

The most fervent supporter of jihadist project among his siblings, the young Hamza could be the final bet for al-Qaeda for relaunching its international standing, recalling the glorious past of the network and making the organization to shine in Bin Laden family's light once again. The lineage with the historical Emir would tighten up the old guards and those followers that are already loyal to the organization, while Hamza's

young age would let him be recognized as peer by the new generation of extremists and to empathize with them.

In such a moment when IS is losing its stronghold in the Middle East and appears more and more interested in establishing a stable footprint in such a strategic region, as South Asia is, AQ's return could trigger a harsh competition between the two organization for the supremacy in the area. It could happen in two ways: on one hand, as a rising competition among insurgents groups affiliated or allied to one of the two jihadist networks (such as in Afghanistan); on the other, as an increase of radicalization among urban and educated classes, whose financial resources and net of contacts would make them less traceable than the militants and more able to infiltrate civil society and public administration at various level, representing a serious challenge for the stability of the area.

ISIS in Pakistan: Myths and Realities

by Asadullah Khan (ISSI – Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad)

Abstract

Until last year, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), was perceived as a major threat to Pakistan's security situation after Khorasan Chapter in Afghanistan. The recent developments in the past few months, especially those in which ISIS lost control over its major operating territories, have weakened its presence in Afghanistan. This paper aims at analyzing ISIS as a potential threat for Pakistan, after considering the internal efforts done by Pakistan to counter this imminent threat. Military operations, securing the Pak–Afghan border and creating a social resilience in the society; to what extent these efforts have secured Pakistan from this evil threat and what is still needed to be done. The recent developments in the Middle East and Pakistan, efforts to safeguard its borders in the form of military operation and fencing, have shaped a scenario in which the threat level for Pakistan is now on minimum level. The threat for Pakistan is more ideological in nature and needs to be defeated with credible de-radicalization programs. It is pertinent to note here that ISIS is at the back foot and is adopting the tactics of negotiation instead of violence.

Introduction

They have rampaged across cities and villages killing innocent, unarmed civilians in cowardly acts of violence. They have abducted women and children and subjected them to torture, rape and slavery. They have murdered Muslims, both Sunni and Shia, by the thousands. They have targeted Christians and other religious minorities, driving them from their homes, murdering them when they can, for no other reason than the fact that they practice a different religion. They have declared their ambition to commit genocide against ancient people. ISIS speaks for no religion. Their victims are overwhelmingly Muslim, and no faith teaches people to massacre innocents".[1] These are the words that President Obama used to describe ISIS in his remarks over the execution of US journalist James Foley by ISIS.

According to Graeme Wood, "Islamic state is no mere collection of psychopath. It is a religious group with carefully considered beliefs, among them that is a key agent of coming apocalypse".[2] ISIS is the new breed of terrorists who revolutionized the ongoing global jihadism by employing a more hardcore and sectarian ideology on which they operate, unlike Al-Qaeda who had anti-US ideology. The core emphasis of this research article is based on the study of ISIS as a terrorist organization, discussing its history, emergence and how this organization is on a downfall if considering that its leader Abu Bakar Al- Baghdadi is not alive as there has been no concrete evidence about his life made public yet. The question addressed in the article is whether ISIS is present in Pakistan and how Pakistan is responding to the threat coming from the expansion of ISIS and its presence in Afghanistan.

However, the rise of ISIS is the failure of major political and war strategies designed by the United States for the invasion of Iraq. From the day in which Saddam Hussein's statue, the symbol of power and control, was brought down in Iraq, things only worsened over time. According to the Al-Jazeera documentary "Enemy of Enemies", the former national security advisor of Iraq, Mowaffak Al-Rubaiein during an interview said, "United States came without knowing as to what was happening"[3], they were unaware of the dynamics or heritage of the power control in Iraq.

Before going into the detailed analysis of the core argument of this paper, the presence of ISIS and its impact on Pakistan, one needs to understand how International relations perceive this kind of organization (ISIS). According to the theories of International Relations, ISIS can be analysed with the prism of fourth and fifth wave of terrorism. The theoretical paradigm provides an in depth and categorical analysis of ISIS along with the prevailing contemporary terrorism around the globe.

Fourth and fifth wave of terrorism

The Fourth Wave of terrorism has been termed as religious terrorism. David Rapport[4] the mastermind of this theory has mentioned four distinct features of modern terrorism:

1-Anarchist

2-Nationalist

3-Leftist, Communist

4-Religious Wave

These four features would be the common aspects found embedded in the terrorist organization. Each of these elements would last for a decade. Initiating with anarchy then another aspect would take over. This theory proved to take the centre stage for 40 years, however, it then faded due to the evolving nature of international politics in the world. However, the contemporary terrorism is closely linked to the religious wave, and therefore its importance yet cannot be ignored.

(2) Bruce Hoffman characterized the modern religious terrorism with three underlying assumptions that distinguish it from others. "The perpetrators must use religious scriptures to justify or explain their violent acts or to gain recruits".[5] According to this assumption, the holy teaching scriptures are deciphered according to their own personal interest, which is in contradiction to the pure fundamental teachings of it. Therefore, ISIS has been involved in manipulating and distorting the fundamental teachings of Islam to justify their acts of violence such as beheading, slaughtering of innocent people and attacks on holy shrines. "The clerical figures must be involved in leadership roles"[6] The clerics who have command over the religion and interpret the scriptures, therefore need to have a leadership role. For example, Zarqawi, Osama bin Ladin or Mullah Umar, were not clerics in the first place, but as they got leadership roles they took on the cleric responsibility, passing on judgements on religious matters as well to direct their followers for recruitment purposes.

"Perpetrators use apocalyptic images of destruction to justify the acts"[7]. As discussed above, these terrorist organizations have a specific road map which they follow and these violent destructive activities are justified in the light of day of judgement. Therefore, in their opinion, if they refrain from these acts people would carry out unlawful things, which would eventually destroy the world.

David Rapoport quoted a significant and useful assessment of modern terrorism, he narrated that since 1880, terrorism has manifested itself in four distinct waves. He is

also of the view that the religious terrorist's wave began in the 1979 and the fifth wave might begin in 2025.[8]

However, in 2008, Jeffrey Kaplan, a religious studies' scholar, introduced the concept of the fifth wave of terrorism and tried to differentiate it from all previous waves. The fifth wave of theory had been predicted to initiate in 2025 as discussed before, but it seems like it has already begun with the presence and tactics used by ISIS. The very first characteristic included in such wave is the radical quest for racial, tribal, and ecological purity. This means that ISIS in particular has embedded in its ideology the pursue for a pure radical quest, which has been portrayed in sectarian divide concept to achieve its goals and objectives effectively. ISIS describes itself as the most pure and pious form of Muslims with an aim to hire only Sunnis into the organization. It considers all other sects as infidel, however there are contradictions among them as only those who pledge allegiance to them are considered as Muslims and all others are considered non-Muslims and a threat to ISIS.

Rape is the signature tactic of the fifth wave of terrorism. This horrific characteristic is the ultimate truth of the modern warfare and modern terrorism. Rape is used by these terrorist organizations to infuse fear and violence into society as a weapon that may destroy the moral values of the targeted society. This often helps them to suppress rebellion or people conspiring against them. ISIS has abused their control by raping women. ISIS would not just rape them in captivity, but committing humane atrocities. When ISIS came to the Sinjar district and over ran it they, "Isis fighters were carrying out a pre-planned mass abduction for the purpose of institutionalised rape. Initially they were looking for unmarried women and girls over eight".[9]

The Fifth wave of terrorism has a major proponent in the form of Authoritarian nature with charismatic leadership patterns. The leadership in the fifth wave of terrorism is mainly authoritarian but charismatic which enables them to run operations as a vision of one person. The charisma and knowledge often eliminate the insecurity to be questioned on any matter due to influence and authority. For instance, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, who served as a deputy under Umar Al-Baghdadi, took control after the top leadership (namely Umar Al-Baghdadi and Abu Al-Masri) was killed by the US forces. However, it was under his control that ISIS revived again from being pushed on the back foot by the US led coalition with the Sunni tribes and expanded into Syria during

the Arab spring under the Assad regime. Baghdadi had influence being a cleric and having knowledge of Islam, which he manipulated for carrying on the agenda of ethnic cleansing. In addition to this, he termed himself as a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to strengthen his position. By declaring himself the caliph, he attracted foreign fighters and fighters from other groups who pledged allegiance to him.

Although Jeffrey Kaplan in his 5th wave of terror and Islamist terror movements has explained other significant characteristics that eventually structure the 5th wave, they still have to surface such as physical withdrawal into wilderness areas. According to this concept, the terrorist groups or organizations completely isolate themselves from society to prevent themselves from being influenced by the structural impurity present in the society, therefore they distance themselves from the society as a result and move to mountainous terrain or in far areas where access is limited. For example, Al-Qaeda base camp were the "Torabora" mountains during their reign in Afghanistan. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan have isolated themselves to the capital of South Waziristan "Wanna" known for its harsh terrain, during their initial years. Whereas, if ISIS is analysed through this characteristic a different approach is clearly visible as ISIS always made their presence felt by using different war tactics and known media strategies.

These two theories, fourth and fifth wave of terrorism explain the modern terrorism, which has dominated the international politics in late 20th century and the entire 21st century, so far. However, in order to identify in which category or wave ISIS falls, it is pertinent to note here that, ISIS is an amalgamation of both the religious terrorism (4th wave) and modern terrorism (5th wave). ISIS is the bridge that connects both theories. Constituting the entire characteristics of both waves of terrorism, ISIS is the breed of terrorists that have all those characteristics explained above.

ISIS and Pakistan

However, coming to the core question of the article: the question of ISIS' presence in Pakistan and the threat that it poses to the state of Pakistan. Will ISIS manage to

penetrate the major cities like Al-Qaeda and TTP did in the last decade? Therefore, to come to any conclusion, is there a need to analyze ISIS as a real threat to Pakistan?

ISIS experienced its real triumph during the Arab spring by taking over cities like Raqqa and Mosul almost without any real battle with the Iraqi forces, as they fell back abandoning the defence lines. Their presence was dominating to the nerves as they were able to take one city with 2000 fighters against 12000.[10] Once ISIS was able to make its impact into the world politics it unveiled its future plan. According to the plan particularly in South Asia, they had an appealing attraction in their objective "*Khorasan chapter*" which comprised of a united Islamic caliphate of states Afghanistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan. Therefore, it attracted certain splinter groups from TTP, commanders of Jundullah have pledged allegiance.[11] Pakistan is one of the potential target for ISIS in the coming years due to its strategic value.

Pakistan after 9/11 faced political, security and social turmoil due to the increasing terrorist presence in the state. The long porous border with Afghanistan caused a great influx of terrorists disguised as refugees into Pakistan as the United States invaded. With time passing, they concealed in the tribal belt of FATA, and they carried out an offensive against innocent civilian and forces of Pakistan being it an allied of the United States in the "War against terror". This FATA tribal belt has proved to be one the safest havens for the breeding of terrorism due to the lawlessness that prevails. The tribalism has also aided these areas along with rugged terrain, the reason for negligence of administration by the government of Pakistan.

Therefore, ISIS has made its way into the unstable Afghanistan. At present time, they are at the door step of Pakistan. ISIS has recognized the potential of the strategic location of these tribal areas from which they can operate in the entire Asian region. However, currently ISIS is facing confrontation with the forces of Al-Qaeda and Taliban. It is the ideological difference between ISIS and Taliban that has caused the clash between these two major fighting organizations. In its 13th issue of Dabiq[12], Daesh or ISIS condemned Taliban of being "Nationalist" who assert sovereignty over Afghanistan and govern it. However, Daesh has denied their rule to be Islamic or according to shariah laws. One of the major reasons for this conflict is Taliban alliances and coordination with Shia groups in Afghanistan and in the region.

After Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi appeared for the first time on media with his inaugural sermon, the so-called Caliph of the Muslim Ummah, he ordered people to accept him as a caliph and pledge allegiance to him. Therefore, soon after that fighting broke out between Taliban and ISIS, some splinter groups of Al-Qaeda and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan waged a war against Taliban. They captured the Taliban commanders and publicly hanged them to set a theme of their rule and ideology.[13] Recently, Daesh has been constantly fighting with Afghan National Security Forces.

The Nangahar province of Afghanistan is doorway to Mamand valley from which militants can cross into Pakistan.[14]After the United States destroyed ISIS' stronghold by dropping the mother of all non-nuclear bombs in the Achin district of Nangahar Province, ISIS searched for a new safe haven. Eventually, after a long fighting in the Nangahar province with over 1000 fighters, ISIS was able to capture an area in the caves in the once stronghold of Al-Qaeda "Torabora" mountains in Afghanistan.[15]

To counter the threat coming from terrorists' movements across the border, the Pakistan Army decided to launch operation Khyber 4, a cleansing operation, in Rajgal valley in FATA. The Pakistan Army successfully cleared the 253 squares kilometres area where the militants were hiding. During this operation, 52 terrorists were killed and many ran away crossing the border in Afghanistan.[16] It is pertinent to note here that this area was the prime target of ISIS and the militants of ISIS were planning to take control of Rajgal valley and then they were planning to expand their control on other areas of FATA. It is Pakistan's commitment to fight terrorism that this treat has been nipped off with iron hand right on the border.

A military operation, Zarb-e-Azb was launched on 26th June 2014, in North Waziristan after the peace negotiations failed to yield the desired results. The aim of this operation was to target the safe havens of local as well as foreign militants and terrorists. The operation initially began with airstrikes on militant hideouts and a ground operation with around 30,000 troops. The operation started with credible intelligence and surveillance information about the militants/terrorists' areas of operations. The operation had four phases; quarantine North Waziristan Agency (NWA), moving out the civilian population, actions against militants/terrorists, and rehabilitation of people. Since June 2014, several hundred militants/terrorists have been killed, their command and control has been completely incapacitated, scores of

gun-manufacturing factories have been destroyed, and hideout tunnels with landmines have been cleared. However, the top leadership of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has fled to Afghanistan.[17]

A twenty point comprehensive National Action Plan (NAP) was also launched after the barbarian attack on an Army public school, in which more than 140 innocent children lost their lives in December, 2014.[18]According to a report presented to the Senate by the Minister of Interior, the government has achieved some land mark results in the form of dismantling the communication networks of terrorists, strengthening and activating the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) by allocating Rs.1.56 billion to it, executing 414 hard core terrorists, normalising the situation in Karachi, controlling hate speeches, registration of religious seminaries, choking terrorists financing and resolving the issues of Afghan refugees.[19] These steps were taken in order to eliminate the internal threats and vulnerabilities present in the society. There are some implementation issues on which the government is facing some problems, but it is not impossible to overcome those issues. For achieving the effective implementation of all the 20 points of NAP, these points must be sub-divided into plans and each point must have clear policy options and directives for implementation so that a tussle in institutions on implementations is avoided.[20]

On February 22nd, 2017 the Pakistan Army announced the launch of a nationwide military operation "Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad', according to the statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Army's media wing. The ISPR Press Release 87/2017 stated:

"Pakistan Army launched "Operation Raddul-Fasaad" across the country. Operation aims at eliminating residual/latent threat of terrorism, consolidating gains of operations made thus far and further ensuring security of the borders. Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Navy, Civil Armed Forces (CAF) and other security/Law Enforcing agencies (LEAs) will continue to actively participate/intimately support the efforts to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country".[21]

Since the launch of Operation Radd-ul-Fasad, the Pakistan Army conducted around 9000 intelligence-based operation across the country, which led the Army to launch 46 major operations against terrorists across the country.[22] Operation Radd-ul-Fassad

is also known as an extension of NAP. Keeping in context, NAP operation Radd-ul-Fassad is launched to complement NAP in such a way that our society meets its true objectives of DDR Strategy. Demilitarization, Demobilization and Rehabilitation DDR (through NAP) is the main aim of Operation Radd-ul-Fassad. Currently, the focus of Radd-ul-Fassad is the de-weaponization of the country through which peace in Karachi and Baluchistan insurgency can be controlled effectively. All these combined efforts have shown that the situation of terrorism in Pakistan is improving over time and the emergence of any new terrorist phenomenon such as ISIS is not possible in Pakistan now.
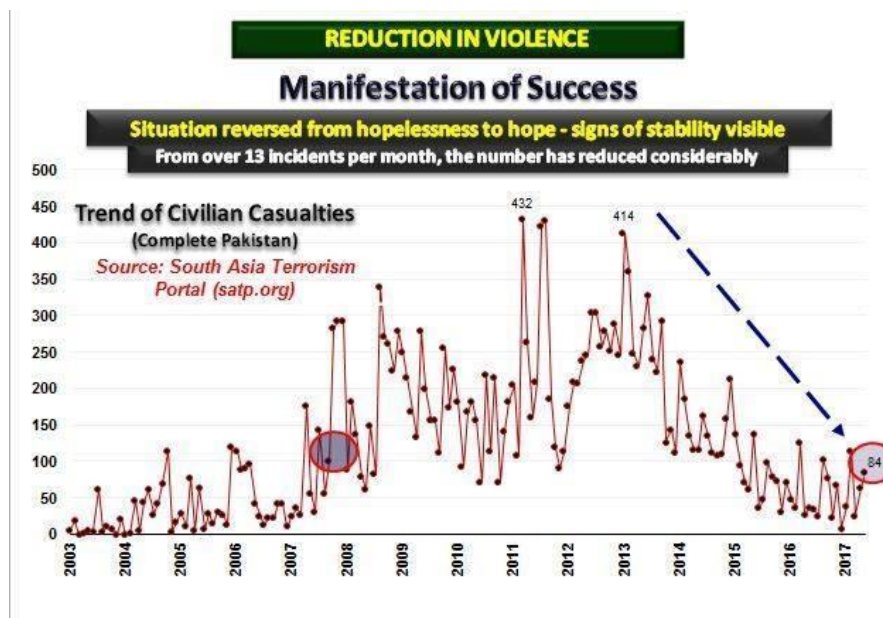

Figure 1 Graph: Decreasing Trend in Civilian Violence in Pakistan

Another perspective also aids at understanding why it is not possible for ISIS to firm footing in the state: operation Khyber 4, launched on the 15th July, 2017. In a month long operation, the Pakistan Army was able to clear an area of more than 100Sq Km[23] in the Rajgal Valley, which was considered to be a potential area from where the militants of ISIS were planning to enter Pakistan. In addition to this, the control of a strategic hill in the area during this operation in Rajgal valley is also considered as the major victory of Pakistani Forces.[24] The Pakistan Army has increased the number of

check posts on Pak-Afghan border in order to increase the vigilance. Fencing of the border is also now turning into reality and is the dire need as other regional countries may also use the elements of ISIS in Afghanistan to create instability in Pakistan.

Conclusion

Initially, Pakistan's strategy to counter the threat of ISIS was focused on using military options, which is moving in the right direction. The only problem with the prevailing strategy is that the military approach to a conflict is always a short-term solution. There has to be a long-term plan so that no external force can easily infiltrate in the society. For this purpose, social resilience is needed to be constructed through intense de-radicalization programmes across the country. There is a direct need to address social issues in the society to achieve true success in creating a social resilience in the society of Pakistan. There is the need to teach primacy of Pakistan as a nation, obligations towards society and the true essence of citizenship to the individuals beyond religious ideologies. The success of this trend is a time taking process, but it needs to be initiated as early as possible on priority basis.

Globally, ISIS is on a decline and similarly facing strong resistance from the main stake holders in Afghanistan. In order for ISIS to establish a stronghold in Pakistan, it needs to conquer the power dynamics in Afghanistan, which are currently held by the Taliban. These powerful Taliban are present there since the '90s and have mapped the terrain in their minds with social acceptance from the locals, but in the context of Pakistan, it is neither invaded nor under a tyranny rule. Pakistan is a democratic state, which has evolved over the past decade due to the horrors it has faced as a nation. It faced the most fearsome guerrilla war and stood firm against the Taliban insurgency. The security forces of Pakistan are fully active to guard its border from any external threat of militancy and insurgency, and other state institutions are on the same page to counter this particular threat internally, which is a major turning point. Pakistan, as discussed above, has institutional integrity among Military Forces, the Parliament and the Judiciary system. This cannot be sabotaged by a disorganized militant organization, which operates in Pakistan on behalf of some splinter groups.

The Evolution of Islamist Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Bangladesh

by Mohammad Humayun Kabir and Ashish Banik (BEI - Bangladesh Enterprise Institute)

Abstract

Islamist extremism/radicalism, a raging global menace, has been afflicting Bangladesh since the 1990s. The paper first presents the state of Islamist radicalization and violent extremism in Bangladesh, highlighting the types of Islamism and violence and the violent groups operating in the country. The paper then focuses on an IS-related extremist organization called Neo-JMB (Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh), the emergence of which has generated quite a discourse on the nature of the presence of IS in Bangladesh. The paper moves on to give an overview of the measures the Government of Bangladesh has adopted for preventing Islamist radicalization and countering violent extremism in the country, including crafting institutional response, building legal framework, enlisting active support of Islamic scholars and the Ulema (religious teachers and clerics), involving civil society organizations, mobilizing public opinion, etc.

Introduction

Bangladesh is a near-homogenous country ethnically, about 99 percent of its population being Bengali in ethnic identity, and predominantly Muslim in faith, with about 90 percent following. Bangladesh's social discourse has been a happy blending of a secular Bengali culture and a deeply entrenched religious identity steeped in Sufism. However, with time going by, the emergence of Islamist extremist groups and their ideologies has been affecting this harmonious relationship between religion and culture. Evidences indicate that Islamist radicalization and violent extremism in Bangladesh are a homegrown but globally linked phenomenon. While the Islamist radical group formation takes place internally, the radical ideas, ideologies and inspiration come from external sources. Significantly, as the extremists' worldview suggests, the causes/drivers of Islamist radicalism in Bangladesh often seem to essentially lie in the international system and global power structure, while the

Islamist ideologues and propagandists tend to exploit the national/local grievances and dissatisfaction among people with a view to indoctrinating and recruiting them, particularly the youth, eventually leading to violent extremism. Some local radical Islamist outfits in Bangladesh have clearly been influenced and inspired by the ideologies and propaganda of the Islamic State (IS) and Al-Qaeda {(Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) in recent times} very skillfully packaged and conveyed to their target groups by means of social media.

The domestic radical and violent extremist groups in Bangladesh have apparently bolstered their capacity and renewed their efforts following the advent of ISIL/ISIS/IS. Drawing inspiration from ISIS, these groups have brought qualitative changes in the form of new techniques and strategy in their indoctrination and recruitment process and the method of perpetration of extremist activities throughout the country. As a result, Bangladesh has experienced an upsurge in radicalization and violent extremism from 2013.

This paper attempts to explore how the emergence of Neo-JMB, an offshoot of the old Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), inspired by the philosophy of IS has aggravated threats of radicalization and violent extremism in Bangladesh in terms of promotion of ideology, propaganda strategy, indoctrination and recruitment process, and the mode of attacks. The paper presents in brief the state of radicalization and violent extremism in Bangladesh, with particularly referencing to the domestic and global conditions contributing to the creation of an environment conducive to the emergence of Islamist radical groups. It provides an overview of the response and preparedness of the Government of Bangladesh to prevent and counter the threats of radicalization and violent extremism in Bangladesh.

State of Islamist radicalization and violent extremism in Bangladesh

Types of Islamism in Bangladesh

As indicated above, Islam in Bangladesh is essentially characterized by Sufi tenets that are inherently accommodative and non-political in nature and tolerant to different faiths and views. Clearly, this is fundamentally different from Salafism, with consequent variance in their respective worldviews, religious practices and

narratives, global Jihad, views on extremist violence, views on countering perceived threats to Islam and Muslims, etc. It is also significant to mention that there are 'national' and non-violent Islamists, while there are Islamists who profess and practice violence and there are those who have nexus with external extremist groups with allegiance to Global Jihadism.

As far as Islamism in Bangladesh is concerned, five types of it are seen here. The first type of Islamism is practiced by some Islamist political parties. For example, some national political parties like Bangladesh Islami Front, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish and Islami Oikya Jote have been doing politics in the name of religion. However, they participate in democratic process and usually do not resort to violent activities. The second type of Islamism has been practiced by some non-party Islamist groups such as the Islamist movements of the Hefazat-e-Islam and the Ahle Hadith. These two groups, having conservative outlook, do have past records of indulging in violent activities. They consider themselves as the custodian of Islamic values and practices in Bangladesh. However, these groups do not have any global jihadi agenda. They tend to pursue their activities with local agenda in mind. The third type of Islamism, which is non-violent in nature, is being practiced by the Tabligh Jamaat. Strictly speaking, it is not an Islamist organization in political/ideological sense; it is in fact a transnational Muslim movement focused on peaceful propagation of religion and promotion of brotherhood. However, there are unsubstantiated reports of infiltration of jihadists in the movement. The fourth type of Islamism is being professed and practiced by some radical and violent extremist groups like the Harkat-ul Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B), Ansar Al-Islam and Neo-JMB that have strong nexus with regional and international terrorist outfits. These groups believe in violent methods to replace the man-made governance system in Bangladesh with a Shariah-based theocratic regime. The fifth category of Islamism resembles with the narrative of Global Jihadism. Some members of expatriate communities of Bangladesh origin have been involved in indoctrinating and recruiting some vulnerable youths in Bangladesh for battle fields in Syria, Iraq or elsewhere. They seem to work with the agenda of global jihadism like the IS or Al-Qaeda.

Types of violence

One of the major features of extremism in Bangladesh is that it is mixed up with political violence. It is therefore very important to understand the nature and types of violence that have been occurring in Bangladesh. The first type of violence takes place frequently when secular political parties and their followers are engaged in violent activities with their political opponents for political gains. In similar fashion, there are incidences that political violence has been perpetrated by some Islamist political parties too. An example may be the spate of violence throughout the country orchestrated in recent times (2013-15) by the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami party in response to the activities of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT). Their target was to disrupt the prosecution of their leaders accused of committing war crimes during Bangladesh's War of Liberation in 1971.

Another type of violence is seen to have been perpetrated in Bangladesh by some ultra-left wing political parties, like Sarbahara and Lal Pataka Bahini, active mostly in southwestern parts of the country. They often got involved in mindless violence against the rural well-to-do class in the name of communist ideology of equality. The menace is largely gone with the ideological degeneration of such unpopular ultra-leftist groups and the government's hard-power approach to quell those.

Another form of violence in Bangladesh is related to the ethnic conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) area in the southeastern part of the country. The hill people of CHT, divided into 13 ethnic groups, resorted to violence against the state from 1975 to 1997 for regional autonomy. The conflict formally ended with the signing of a peace accord on 2 December 1997 between the Government of Bangladesh and the umbrella organization of the hill people called the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS). However, Islamist radicalization since 1992 and violent extremism perpetrated since 1999 have now become a major concern for Bangladesh.

Overview of violent extremist groups before the rise of neo-JMB

The first Islamist radical outfit in Bangladesh, HuJI-B, was formed in 1992 by some Afghan war veterans who had returned from Afghanistan with militant ideology and battlefield experience. HuJI-B had close connections with Al-Qaeda and Pakistan-based Laskar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaishe Mohammad (JeM). Funded by various NGOs

based in the Middle East, it set up numerous Qawmi Madrasas throughout the country and, following their radicalization, conducted training to new recruits and other Islamist extremist groups from 1992 to 1998. During this time, this outfit focused its activities in the Cox's Bazaar and Chittagong Hill Tracts areas reportedly to support the Rohingyas in Myanmar and recruit jihadis for sending them to other war theatres in the Middle East and elsewhere.[1] Following this preparatory phase, this extremist group launched sporadic attacks in 1999, 2001, 2004 and 2005 that resulted in deaths and destruction of secular political leaders, cultural activists and their festivals, intellectuals, journalists, Christians, etc.[2]

Another Islamist organization named "Jamaatul Mujahideen, Bangladesh" (JMB) was formed by few followers of Ahle Hadith movement in 1998. This group, basically homegrown but inspired by Al-Qaeda, mounted attacks on cinema halls, cultural activities, intellectuals, judges, advocates, police, secular NGOs, banks, etc. What is notable here is that this extremist outfit had broadened its targets of attack including members of law enforcement agencies and the judges whom they termed as custodian of "taghut."[3]

In addition to home-grown groups, Bangladesh has also experienced the rise of a transnational group, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT), that espouses Islamist doctrines in universities mainly targeting the youth of middle and upper-middle class background. Newspaper reports have revealed that HT has also targeted children who attend English-medium schools and madrasas. It has introduced a holistic view of radical Islamism and used the offline and online media platforms to spread their messages, ideas, views and narratives to replace the democratic form of governance with Shariah-based system. Another outfit, called Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT – initially a blog), now renamed as Ansar Al-Islam, was launched in 2005. Funded through a NGO called Research Cooperation United Development (RCUD), it is linked to Al-Qaeda that follows the precepts of Anwar Al-Awlaki.[4]

Current status of extremist threat in Bangladesh
The rise of neo-JMB drawing inspiration from ISIS

A number of violent incidents including the attack on the upscale Holey Artisan Bakery in the Gulshan area of the city of Dhaka and the attempted attack on a very large Eid congregation in a district north of Dhaka in July 2016 apparently indicate that the footprint of IS has been increasing in Bangladesh. However, the presence of IS in the country remains a highly contested issue, as far as the policy makers, law enforcement agencies and intelligence community are concerned. Despite this game-changing incident, there are lingering doubts as to whether the Neo-JMB has indeed connected itself fully with IS. The members of law enforcement and intelligence agencies do not seem to have found any physical infrastructure and strong network relating to IS in Bangladesh. Most concerned citizens of the country think that the Neo-JMB might only have been inspired by the ideology and strategy of IS.

However, IS formally claimed its presence in Bangladesh in November 2015 through its publication 'Dabiq' where it had published an interview entitled 'The Revival of Jihad in Bengal', with Shaykh Abu Ibrahim al Hanif as the head of IS operations in Bangladesh. Some even trace the activities of IS back in 2014 when it released a Bengali-language video showing various individuals pledging their support for the so-called caliphate.[5] Since 2014, social media has reportedly indicated the growing cooperation between ISIS and some Bangladeshi extremist groups.[6] Attention may be drawn to a view that a faction of JMB, endorsing IS' ideology, may be seen as an extension of IS in Bangladesh.[7] The faction of JMB, regrouped with inspiration from IS, has been termed as "Neo-JMB" by the intelligence and law enforcement agencies of Bangladesh. Interestingly, in the article on "The Revival of Jihad in Bengal", IS praises the JMB for waging jihad against a '*taghut*' government and considers JMB as the only "proper jihad organisation in Bangladesh based on the Quran and Sunnah".[8] In addition, the IS official publication Dabiq reveals that Bangladesh occupies an important strategic geographic position, as it is located on the eastern side of India and Wilayat Khurasan [Pakistan-Afghanistan] is located on its western side.[9]

Clearly, there are divergent views on the nexus between the "Neo-JMB" and ISIS. While some scholars are of the view that the JMB is in league with the so-called Islamic State,[10] many security experts in Bangladesh tend to believe that IS is yet to

find a foothold in the country despite IS claims on series of killing of secular thinkers, bloggers, members of minority communities and bomb attacks in places of worship.

It is relevant here to understand that IS operates and exercises influence in three different ways. It launches and conducts violent operations directly, it maintains nexus with violent extremist groups through networks of affiliation, and it acts as a source of inspiration for Islamist extremist groups in many parts of the world. The activities of Neo-JMB of Bangladesh may be clubbed under the rubric of the third category of IS modes of influence peddling.

The role of foreign nationals of Bangladesh origin in promoting ISIS ideology

There are concerns that foreigners with roots in Bangladesh may come into this country with IS ideology and continue their fight in Bangladesh. There are reports that attempts were made by some British citizens of Bangladesh origin, who were considered to be sympathizers of the IS, to recruit fighters from Bangladesh for participating in violent extremist activities.[11]In 2014, police arrested Samiun Rahman, a British citizen of Bangladesh origin, in Dhaka allegedly for recruiting Bangladeshi youths for IS and al-Nusra.[12] Similarly, Touhidur Rahman, another British citizen of Bangladesh origin, was arrested for killing bloggers.[13]The territorial demise of IS in Iraq and Syria may now reduce efforts for recruitment of Islamist fighters from Bangladesh for IS Central.

IS calls for re-organizing extremist outfits under one umbrella

IS puts emphasis on unity among various militant groups and their organizational effectiveness. It is evident from the following:

> "The soldiers of the Khilāfah in Bengal pledged their allegiance to the KhalīfahIbrāhīm (hafidhahullāh), unified their ranks, nominated a regional leader, gathered behind him, dissolved their former factions, performed the necessary military preparations, and hastened to answer the order from the Islamic State leadership, by targeting the crusaders and their allies wherever they may be found,........."[14] (Dabiq, November 2015) "to close their ranks, unite under soldiers of Khalafah in Bengal and aid them in every possible way".[15] Although IS has lost its territory in Iraq and Syria, it is not yet dead as an ideological force. Therefore,

the underlying message of unified leadership and contextual and periodic organizational regrouping remains valid for fighters and sympathizers in many parts of the world, including Bangladesh.

The rise of IS propaganda and its impact on extremist narratives in Bangladesh

Before the rise of Hizb-ut Tahrir (HT) in Bangladesh in 2001, HuJI-B and JMB remained focused on the domestic agenda and targeted cultural symbols considered un-Islamic and secularists deemed apostates.[16] HT came out with a comprehensive narrative introducing the idea of "Khaleefah" and identifying Bangladesh as a land of "Jahiliya"[17]. It considered democratic forms of government as oppressors of Muslims. It has transformed the landscape of radicalization in Bangladesh and linked it with a global agenda. However, the fragmented ideas and narratives were further developed by the Islamic State that perceived Jihad as a communal obligation and justified it for abolishing organizations and authorities of the Jahili system.[18]It has made Jihad obligatory for all Muslims introducing the word "Hijrah" (immigration) defined as a pillar inherent in Jihad. These narratives, although false, made an appeal to some extremists of local violent extremist groups in Bangladesh. According to one intelligence report, at least 38 Bangladeshis had travelled through various countries to reach Syria and joined the IS.[19]Bangladesh has sustained 45 attacks since September 2015 and the Islamic State claimed ten of them.[20]As indicated above, despite its territorial defeat in Iraq and Syria, the IS is likely to continue to inspire, support and instigate attacks opening a virtual network transcending state boundaries to promote indoctrination and recruitment throughout the world including Bangladesh.[21]

*The enhanced ability of the extremist groups to recruit the youth of diverse backgrounds*

Extremist organizations are often capable of operating in a faster way than state organizations. They use the latest and advanced communication technologies in the form of social media and perhaps maintain the informal institutional organizations, door to door contacts and criminal-terror networks to carry out their recruitment activities.[22] One US-based scholar conducted a study on the data of individual militants arrested between July 2014 and June 2015 and drew a conclusion that majority of militants had come "from middle class or upper middle class backgrounds; a significant number were educated in prestigious institutions of higher learning

and/or have a background in technical education."[23] Most of the militants, mostly youth, recruited by Neo-JMB, do have middle and upper-middle class backgrounds.

Threat assessment: number of attacks, frequency of attacks, potential areas of the attack and category of victims

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), a non-government think-tank in Dhaka, undertook a media survey and compiled 82 terrorist incidents that took place between January 2013 and August 2016 throughout Bangladesh. These were perpetrated by Ansar Al Islam (AaI) that is influenced by Al Qaeda in the Indian Sub-Continent (AQIS) and Neo JMB that is inspired by IS.

To be precise, out of these 82 violent incidents, 26 incidents were claimed by AaI/AQIS and Neo JMB/ISIS claimed responsibility for 55 incidents; HT mounted only one attack. There are apprehensions in Bangladesh that most of the HT cadres might have aligned themselves with the Neo-JMB, inspired by the narratives of ISIS and following their ban on 22 October 2010.

Figure One: Number of Attacks, January 2013 to August 2016
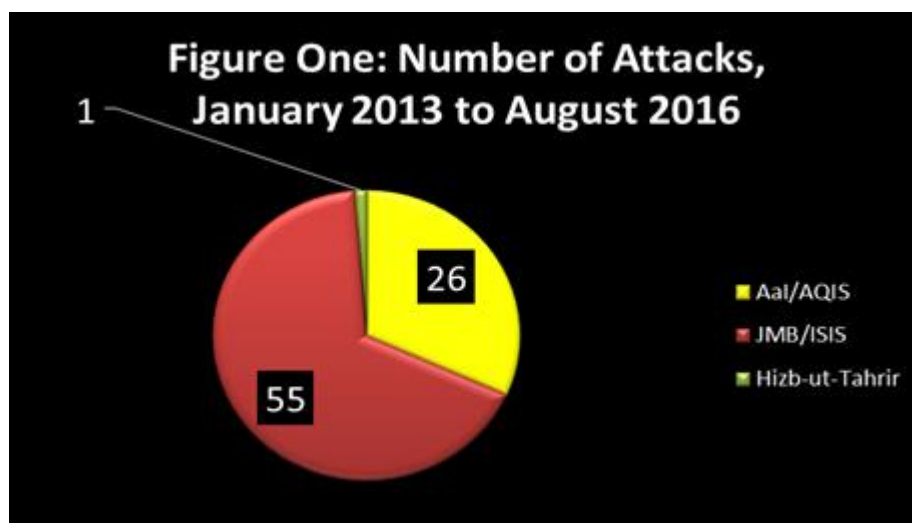
The following graph indicates that terror incidents had been on the rise from 2014 to 2016. Most of the incidents had taken place in these three years. Terror incidents in Bangladesh have declined sharply in 2017. This indicates that the law enforcement agencies, in cooperation with civil society, have been successful not only in capturing the terrorists but also in dismantling their hideouts. The government must be complimented for its tireless efforts to stem the rise of violent extremism by

launching a series of offensive operations throughout the country.[24]At the same time, the recent arrest of many terrorists indicates that they are still trying to regroup in order to be able to launch deadly attacks on soft targets.

FIGURE TWO: ATTACK FREQUENCY ON YEARLY BASIS
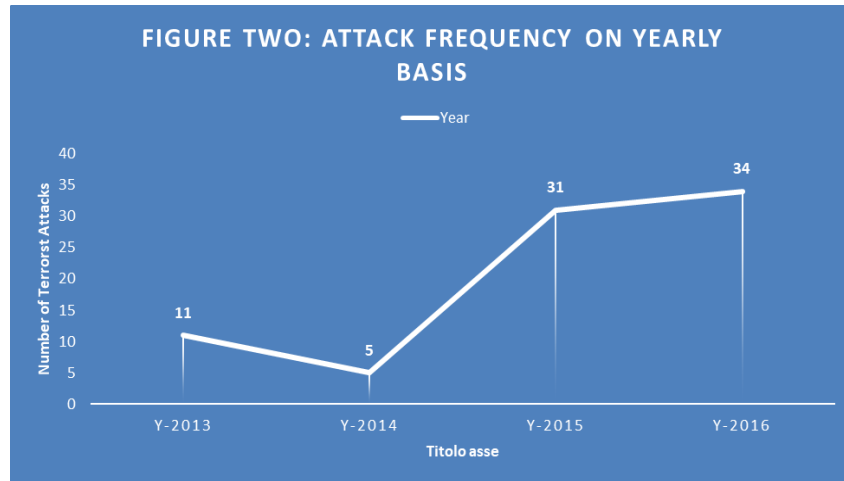
Analysis of the 82 terror incidents reveals that the extremist groups had been expanding their targets for launching attacks. This is evident from the following figure three that the radical and violent extremist groups had expanded their horizon of attacks significantly in 2013-16. There are plausible reasons to believe that the narratives of AQIS and IS might have contributed to this factor. Figure three indicates that extremist groups mostly targeted foreigners, bloggers (writers in social media) and the members of different religious communities as well as some sects of Muslims.
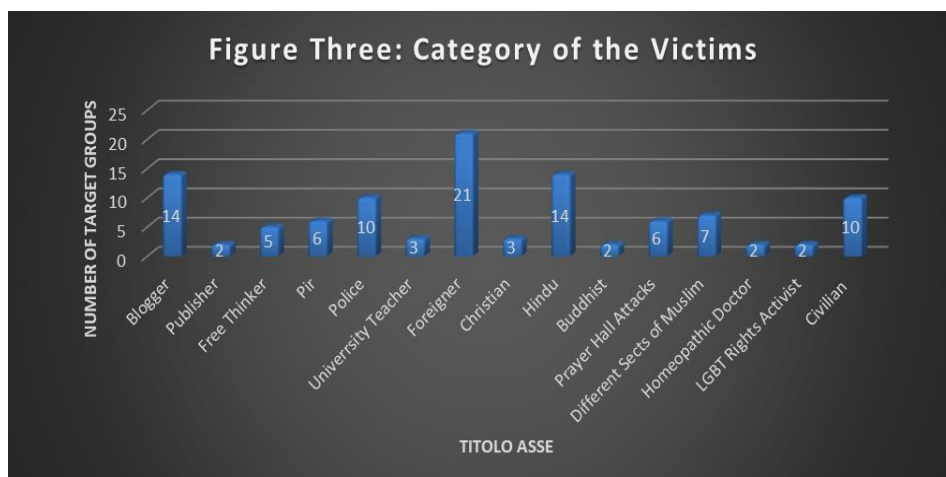
Figure Three: Category of the Victims

Figure four shows that Dhaka is the most affected area of all the districts in Bangladesh, whereas Chittagong scores a poor second with five incidents. This indicates that radicalization is creeping into the large urban centers where the youth are heavily engaged in the use of Internet and social media. Concentrating on the urban centers, Islamist militants have been trying to spread their operational base throughout the country. Out of 64 districts in Bangladesh, they launched operations in 26 districts between January 2013 and August 2016. This indicates that the level of threat emanating from radicalization and violent extremism has the potential to become a serious threat to the peace, stability, security and development of the country, if there ever occurs a letup in the resolve and vigilance of the government and society in this regard.

Figure Four: Districts Affected by Militant Attacks
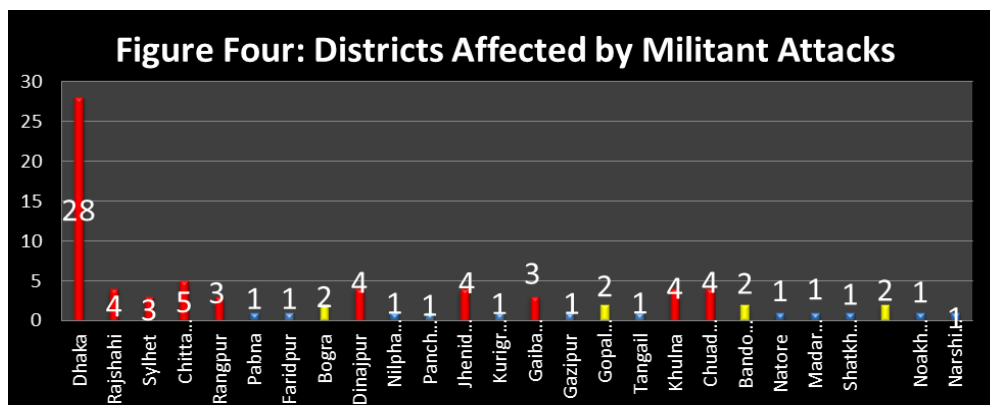
The Rohingya crisis in Southeastern border area of Bangladesh: a potential IS target?

An exodus of about 700,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees have crossed over into Bangladesh in just a matter of 3 months from September to November 2017, fleeing an intolerable environment of decades of most brutal forms of ethnic and religious persecution by the Buddhist majority in the Rakhine state of Myanmar and the army crackdown on the Rohingyas on 25 August 2017. Myanmar army's cleansing operation in Rakhine literally turned out to be a well-planned and well-executed operation in ethnic cleansing, according to the U.S, the UN and many of its member states. The prevailing conditions may be conducive to Islamist radicalization and recruitment. The global jihadists, such as IS and Al Qaeda, may be lurking on the horizon to exploit

the tragic crisis and instigate, radicalize and recruit some of the disaffected in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazaar and Myanmar's Rakhine state. While the Rohingya refugee crisis is humanitarian in nature, it entails security risks not only for Bangladesh and Myanmar but also for all countries in the region and the world at large.

Preventing Radicalization and Countering Violent Extremism: Response of the Government

Bangladesh has achieved remarkable success in preventing radicalization and countering violent extremism by adopting kinetic measures and soft power approach since the Awami League-led government came to office in January 2009. Since then, the Government has undertaken a notable sum of institutional, legal and policy initiatives to prevent radicalization and combat violent extremism in the country. All the measures in fact emanate from the government's "zero tolerance" policy.

A) **Institutional Response:** The Government formed in April 2009 a seventeen-member "National Committee on Militancy Resistance and Prevention" comprising several relevant ministries and security agencies to tackle the threat of extremism and terrorism and mobilize public opinion against extremist activities. The Committee is headed by the Minister for Home Affairs. The Government also formed an eight-member National Committee for Intelligence Coordination in July 2009, with the Prime Minister as its Chairperson, to coordinate the intelligence activities of different agencies to counter the nefarious activities of the violent extremists. Another significant step taken by the present government is the setting up of a Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crimes Unit (CTTC), under the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), to increase vigilance at all levels of society. The DMP and RAB (Rapid Action Battalion) launched mobile applications as part of their community engagement in countering Islamist radicalism with the help of the common man. The android app entitled 'Hello CT' is developed by the CTTC unit of DMP to encourage members of the public to provide information on extremists and other criminals.

The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of the Anti-Money Laundering Department (AMLD) under the Bangladesh Bank (Central Bank) and the Central Intelligence Cell (CIC) of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) under the Internal Resources Division (IRD) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) have been entrusted to monitor any financial irregularities conducted through financial institutions and NGOs. FIU is responsible for analyzing suspicious transaction reports as well as sending recommendations to the competent authority to take necessary action.

B) **Legal Framework:** The government has enacted strong legislation to combat radicalization and violent extremism. Both the anti-terrorism Act 2009 and the Money Laundering Prevention Act 2009 have been revised and updated, in the past few years, to make them more robust and bring them in line with international standards.

C) **National Education Policy**: The government introduced a strong National Education Policy 2010, highlighting the need for reforming unregulated Madrasa curricula and monitoring financing of the many Madrasas across the country.

D) **The Use of Religious Clerics**: An impressive number of religious clerics in Bangladesh (more than 100,000) issued in 2017 a Fatwa condemning terrorism and militancy, including violent attacks on non-Muslims. Such Islamist radical and extremist activities have been declared as "Haraam." (prohibited in Islam). Indeed, such active role of religious clerics would be essential in spreading and disseminating appropriate messages to people that will build narratives alternative to extremist views, ideas and values.

In view of the nature of the threat emanating from IS and AQIS, some of the policy initiatives and strategies have proved effective while others may need more adjustment following a "whole of society approach"[25] as well as a whole-of-government approach. For example, updating of the legal framework, government-society collaboration, extensive collaboration with international partners and firm 'zero tolerance' political stand of the government against the threat of extremism have proved useful and hence earned appreciation both at home and abroad.

Apart from domestic measures, Bangladesh has forged close international cooperation and collaboration with a number of countries on the issue of Islamist radicalization

and violent extremism. Bangladesh has also acceded to all the relevant UN Conventions.

Conclusion

Bangladesh has made significant progress in preventing Islamist radicalization and countering violent extremism by means of applying both kinetic and soft power measures, although the accent has been more on the hard power side. It is important to bear in mind that kinetic measures alone will not be effective unless it is combined with soft power initiatives at the policy and programmatic levels. Cooperation and trust building between government and society is essential for a sustainable P/CVE regime. Appropriate policy environment needs to be maintained with periodic review and adjustment of institutional and legal frameworks as well as strategy and planning. Conceptual clarity and capacity building of the relevant government agencies is pretty much essential. Building community resilience is extremely important for both preventing and combating radicalization and violent extremism, in close collaboration with government efforts. Developing alternative narratives is also very important. Here the role of the Islamic scholars and Imams is crucial. In view of all this, there is also the need of an apex national body for directing, organizing, monitoring and overseeing all the P/CVE-related activities.

It is very important to understand the nature of violence. When political violence is mixed up with violence in the name of religion, drawing a line between the two is very difficult. If all forms of violent extremism are amalgamated, it might create difficulties in conceptual understanding and developing coherent and effective policy and strategy to prevent and combat Islamist radicalization and violent extremism. It is also essential to understand the distinction between homegrown Islamism and global jihadism, defining its consequences.

The IS may be territorially vanquished in Iraq and Syria, but its ideology remains a potent force to reckon with, as global jihadists skillfully combines their ideology with their victimhood narrative and their perceived threats to Islam and Muslims from some Western powers. As Bangladesh's Neo-JMB continues to draw inspiration from IS, as many other organizations and individuals do across the world, eternal

government and societal vigilance is a *sine quo none.* Needless to say, terrorists infrastructures in Bangladesh may have been disrupted and dismantled but the menace has not been defeated. Terrorist remnants are still around and, above all, the ideology and propaganda machine online continue to be rather robust.

As such, preventing and countering radicalism in cyber space remains a challenge. Putting an end to the problem of terrorist financing is another lingering challenge. Plugging the loopholes in Bangladesh's criminal justice system is a nagging problem obstructing the due process of bringing the perpetrators of extremist violence to justice. For example, there are reports that militants of various extremist outfits after getting bail have been involved in the killing of secular activists.[26]

While there are initiatives in the area of counter-radicalization in terms of preventive measures, there is no government program on de-radicalization for mainstreaming and re-integrating the Islamist radical elements back into the society.

Violent extremism of the Islamist variety is a transnational threat. As such, one would wonder as to how far 'national' measures by one country are likely to be able to mitigate the menace. In addition, the drivers/causes of radicalization and violent extremism at times seem to lie beyond a country's national boundaries. Needless to say, the Westphalian order by definition often seems to stand in the way of transparent and effective international cooperation in the field of P/CVE. However, international cooperation may be accelerated in the areas of cyber security, terrorist financing, de-radicalization programs and capacity-building of those engaged in C/PVE. Such cooperation may also be forged in respect of apprehending global Islamist radicals of Bangladesh origin and preventing their return to Bangladesh for jihadi activities.

The transformation of the Jihadist insurgency in the Philippines

by Francesca Manenti (Ce.S.I. – Centre for International Studies)

Abstract

The paper presents the different phases known by extremism and jihadism in the Philippines. It starts with the analysis of the first group who adopted a jihadist agenda in its struggle against national authorities: Abu Sayyaf (ASG). Underlining the characteristics and the evolution of the group in the last two decades, the paper presents the condition that allowed the spread of Daesh in the archipelago. In particular it gives results to two factors: the importance of the insularity for the evolution of the group and the connections existing between ASG and jihadist group in Malaysia and Indonesia. It concludes with the perspective of how the fall of the Caliphate can affect the jihadist panorama in the region.

In the last four years, the archipelago of the Philippines has become the epicenter of the resurgence of jihadist violence in Southeast Asia. The atrophied extremist groups, operative in the country since the 90', received new lifeblood from the Caliphate in the Middle East, as several Filipino mujahideen joined Daesh (Islamic State, IS) in Syria gaining funds and expertise. Even if the militancy is heterogeneous and doesn't pursue a single agenda, the interest in using IS' brand and money has brought the different realities to collaborate under the same umbrella and to declare loyalty to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The foundation of a local branch of the Caliphate in Mindanao, in the southern part of the Philippines, has beckoned aspiring and experienced jihadist from all over the region and inflamed the extremist propaganda.

The first seed of Jihadism in the Philippines: Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)

Jihadism appeared for the first time in the Philippines in 1990 thanks to the proselytism and the activity of Abdurajak Janjalani, an Islamic scholar educated to Salafism in Libya, Syria and Saudi Arabia as well as a veteran of the Afghan-Soviet war. As happened to several mujahideen, the experience in Afghanistan allowed Janjalani to

enter in contact with al-Qaeda and its network. In fact, Janjalani was close to Mohammed Jamal al-Khalifa, brother-in-law of Bin Laden which supervised a network of companies and non-governmental organizations used by al-Qaeda to provide funding all over the Southeast Asia. Through the Philippine headquarters of the Islamic Relief Organization (IRO), headed by Khalifa, Janjalani received the resources to set up a jihadist-inspired group committed to the establishment of an Islamic State in the Philippines. Returning from Afghanistan, Janjalani decided to import in the archipelago the Wahabi interpretation of Islam and the Jihadist ideology, in order to take over the struggle against the central government from the traditional Islamic militancy, which have operated in the southern parts of the archipelago since the Independence of the country from the colonial ruler. Since 1946, this area, called Bangsamoro and comprising the islands of Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi e Palawan, has been the fighting ground between the government in Manila and the Islamic armed insurgency of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), battling for the independence of their land from the Christian majority population[1]. This social fabric, prone to independentism and resentment towards central authorities, has been the ideal background for Janjalani's project to root and flourish. Having started as part of the transnational Muslim movement Tablighi Jamaat (Society for Spreading Faith)[2], which help him with propaganda and proselytism in Basilan, Janjalani soon was able to create a splinter and autonomous group, called Abu Sayyaf (ASG) or Mujahideen Commando Freedom Fighters (MCFF)[3]. The real consecration of ASG within the Filipino insurrectional panorama took place between 1991 and 1992, following the attack against the Christian missionary ship M/V Doulos, hit by a grenade at the port of Zamboanga, and the killing of the Italian missionary Salvatore Carzedda. Janjalani's reputation and the success of its sermons attracted young militants willing to fight their jihad for the creation of an Islamic State in the country. In addition to young people fascinated by Janjalani's rhetorical ability, the group found a preferential recruitment pool among those MNLF militants who, disappointed by the negotiation process opened by the group with the Manila government, looked at Abu Sayyaf as a possible alternative to bring forward their cause against the central authorities.

The appeal of the group in the eyes of the Filipino insurgents was also determined by the ability to access, through ASG, a real training programs directly managed by al-

Qaeda members, primarily Ramzi Yussef, nephew of the most famous Khaled Sheik Mohammed, as well as the author of the first attack against the World Trade Center in New York in 1993, which in the early '90s was sheltered by ASG as a valuable support to carry forward the Qaedist agenda in the region. The direct connection between ASG and Bin Laden's network is confirmed by the involvement of some Filipino militants in the Bojinka Operation in 1995, which plotted to bomb eleven American airplanes and to assassinate Pope John Paul II in Manila. The neutralization of the plan and the subsequently interruption of the financial support of al-Qaeda, caused by the discovery and consequently the dismantling of the companies belonging to the Bin Laden family (including also the NGOs managed by the brother-in-law al-Khalifa), have forced Abu Sayyaf to look for new channels of funding, in order to carry on its activities. At this purpose, in the second half of the 1990s the group began to shift its focus from purely religious objectives (such as the Christian missions in the country) to the more lucrative criminal activities. At this time ASG got in touch with urban organized crime, often managed by important businessmen of the southern cities that acted as facilitators for money laundering and the black market, as well as engaged in piracy. In this way, Janjalani's group was able to integrate flows of money produced by the trafficking of weapons, drugs and counterfeit products with those of ransoms.

The definitive marginalization of the ideological drive at the base of the group's actions was determined by the sudden death of Janjalani in 1998. The passing away of the spiritual leader brought ASG to split in several cells, each of them guided by one of the senior Emirs which composed the leadership council[4]. This crumbling was inevitably accentuated by the geographical conformation of the Philippine archipelago: the territorial distance existing between the different islands, in fact, favored the progressive atomization of the movement in groups of militiamen fully self-sufficient in terms of finding resources and operational capabilities. Despite the independence of the different cells, the members of the group have always preferred to continue operating under the name of Abu Sayyaf in order to take advantage of the national and international notoriety which the brand was associated to.

Therefore, between the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium ASG was divided into two main branches, each of them extremely heterogeneous in its composition: one based in Basilan and another on the island of Sulu. The first was

led by Janjalani's younger brother, Khaddafi (who was named the new leader after Abdurajak's departure). It was composed by the militants who have always been loyal to the Janjalani family, by the group of the emir Isnillion Hapilon, commander of the most operational wing of ASG and by the cell of Abu Sabaya, responsible for planning and administration. The branch in Sulu was headed by Galib Andang, also known as the Commander Robot, and was focused on kidnapping for the purpose of extortion: form 2000 to 2001, there would be about 140 citizens abducted by the group, most of them released following the payment of large sums by families or governments. As ransoms were an easy way of funding, the group started to be focused on kidnappings.

The extent of the jihadist threat in the archipelago was proved by US decision to launch the Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks. Between 2001 and 2003, about 1,200 members of the US Special Operation Command Pacific (SOPAC) were deployed in support of the Manila security forces, firstly on the island of Basilan and later, jointly with the US Special Forces, in Sulu. Despite the losses caused by the counter-terrorist operation, ASG could count on the regional jihadist network to regroup and to find support not just for facing the military campaign but also for boosting the extremist agenda all over the Southeast Asia. In fact, it's at this time that ASG strengthened its links with the Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the group affiliated to al-Qaeda which wanted to establish Sharia in Indonesia. It's known that Filipino militants had been trained by Dalmatian and Umar Patel, JI commanders and probably two of the masterminds of the terrorist attack in Bali in 2002. They taught ASG how make explosive devices to be used in the operations. The collaboration with Indonesian group has been crucial for ASG in carrying on the three big terrorist attacks, that earned it to be counted among the main international terrorist groups: the attack at Francisco Bangoy International Airport in Davao City (2003), when 21 people were killed; the explosion of Superferry 14 in Manila bay (February 2004), causing 116 victims; the three simultaneous bombs in Makaty City, Davao City and General Santos City, known as S.Valentine's attack (2005), in which 8 people died and 96 were hurt.

The escalation of terrorism in the county brought US and the Philippines government to intensify the military campaign against militants, launching the operation Oplan

Ultimatum in 2006. It led progressively to a reduction of the numbers of fighters and especially to kill the high-level commanders, including Khaddafi himself. The decapitation of the leadership condemned the group to be victim of the insularity of the Philippines once again, which unreveled the network on the ground. Unable to operate inland because of the massive deployment of the Philippines Armed Forces, the survived cells tried to fall back on the maritime front and to exploit their ability in navigation and their knowledge of the area's island nature in order not to give up completely their agenda.

In this way, in the mid 2000s ASG refocused on piracy, organize crime and kidnappings for extortion and lost any ideological influence in formulating its agenda. However, this change didn't affect the popularity of the groups among Filipino Muslim communities in the south. The flow of cash granted by its activities persuaded young boys, especially from the villages in the jungle and in rural areas, to become part of the group, attracted by the easy earnings more than by the demand of independence. The marginalization of the ideological dimension has been compensated by the provision of jobs and salaries to poor young individuals, which had no better alternatives nor expectations. It allowed ASG to use the social needs of the rural population in the southern islands to regroup itself and to plant its roots again inside the area.

Dust off he Jihadist dimension: the foundation of the ISIS branch in the Philippines

The national focus adopted by the group, its drift from terrorism to criminality and the consequent loss of credibility caused grievances within the group, that turned into real fractures after the establishment of Abu Bakr al-Baghadadi's Caliphate in Iraq and Syria. Indeed, the military success in the Middle East and the rapid rise of the group as the new point of reference of the international jihadist terrorism gave new lifeblood to those Filipino cells which were not satisfied by the transformation of the insurgency in the last seven years. Fascinated by IS, some commanders took the distances from ASG and declared loyalty to al-Baghdadi, looking for new connections that could revamp their operational capabilities and rehabilitate their names. One of the first high-level militant who joined Daesh was Isnilon Hamilton, the ASG

commander in Basilan and one of the top leader of the group, who pledged alliance just a month after the declaration of the Caliphate. He was followed by militants from Basilan, which are bound by ethnicity (they are ethnic Yakan), family ties or by a desire for revenge against national security Forces. This connections let Hapilon's faction to have contact both with operational allies inside Philippines, especially in Zamboanga and in Sulu, and with Malaysian radicals, in Sandakan and Sabah (where families had connections with Saudi Arabia) as well as from peninsular Malaysia. Thanks to his experience in the ground, his status of high-ranking commander and his charisma for recruiting young militants, Hapilon was appointed the Emir of the group affiliated to IS, with the name of Abu Abdullah al-Filippini. Together with his allies, Abu Anas al Muhajir, Malaysian commander of Ansar al-Sharia, and Abu Harith, representative of the Sulu-based unit Marakah al-Ansar, Hapilon founded the Battallion of God's Fighters, which was the core of Daesh's branch in the Philippines.

The second leader who made bayat (oath of allegiance) to IS was Mohammad Jafaar Maguid (alias Tokboy), commander of Ansarul Khilafa Philippines (AKP) and former militant of MILF. He had good links with extremists in Indonesia and, in particular, with some fighters, like Ahmad Saifullah Ibrahim (alias Sucipto), a direct conduit through the Southeast Asian militants in Syria (Katibah Nusantara), and Muhammad Reza Kiram, which went in Syria in 2014. The third group to pledge allegiance to IS was the Maute group, based in Lanao del Sur and also known as IS in Ranao. It is composed by Maranao ethnic and well-educated young individuals, as it established its stronghold in Mindanao State University in Malawi City. It was founded in 2013 by the two brothers Omarkhayan Romato e Abdullah Maute, who spent several years abroad studying respectively in Egypt and in Jordan and created personal ties in North Africa and Middle East with local radical environments. Moreover, they are sons of the MILF commander, Cayamora Maute, bound that assured the group an open door toward the hierarchies of the insurgent reality. The regional and international connection, on one hand, and the rooting within the ethnic and social fabric of its strongholds, on the other, has made Maute one of the most serious threat for national security in the Philippines. This trend has been blatant during the battle in Marawi, the provincial capital of Lanao del Sur, between Maute groups and Philippines Armed Forces, which lasted five months and ended on the 17th of October 2017 after the killings of Omar Maute and Hapilon.

The so-called Marawi siege underlined also the deep collaboration that existed between the group affiliated to Daesh in the Philippines. Indeed, the battle started after that Manila's authorities tried to capture Hapilon while visiting Marawi, but Maute's militants rushed to the Emir's help from all over the region.

If these groups represent the Filipino realities allied with Daesh at the first place, the spread of IS propaganda and the increase in fundings and success experienced by the the affiliated local branch brought soon other groups to look for a pragmatic cooperation with Hapilon's reality, extending the operational range of Daesh in the Philippines to all the southern islands of the archipelago, from Mindanao to Tawi-Taiwan. In June 2016, the umbrella group was apparently recognized as official local branch of the Caliphate in Southeast Asia.

Conclusion

The creation of a province of Daesh in the Philippines has revamped the interest of local insurgency for the international network connected to jihadist terrorism more than the fervor of the radical ideology. The search for financial resources, training and popularity with which to increase the effectiveness of the national agenda, has brought the different realities that composed the heterogeneous militancy in the Philippines to find new reasons to collaborated and overcome personal interests. However, the death of the Emir, Hapilon, the charismatic leader chosen to lead such a multifaceted group and the defeat of the Caliphate in the Middle East could generate new transformation of the extremist environment in the Philippines and in the broader region. If, on one hand, the crumbling of Daesh and the subsequent cut of funding could bring some cells to come back to the lucrative criminal activities, on the other, this evolution could generate an hemorrhage of fighters from Middle East to the region. As some conduit for communication and logistic have been opened during the last four years, they could become safe pathways both for Asian foreign fighters to come back home and for foreigner mujahideen escaping the battleground in Syria and looking for new environment where to regroup. The presence within the Philippines, in the southern part as well as in the urban centers (including Manila) of North African

and Middle Eastern facilitators seems to testify the existence of direct connection between the two areas.

In this framework, even if the Filipino component of Daesh's local branch appears in crisis, the presence inside the group of militants coming from Malaysia and Indonesia and the well-functioning exchanges with the Middle East could turn the so called Bangsamoro area in a new epicenter of instability, spreading its effects far beyond the archipelago.[5]

The Current State of Terrorism in Indonesia: Vulnerable Groups, Networks, and Responses

by Alif Satria, Fitriani, Pricilia Putri Nurmala Sari, and Rebekha Adriana[1]

(CSIS - Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia)

Abstract

The paper aims to provide a portrayal of the current terrorism network in Indonesia after the emergence of ISIS in 2014. It aims to explain the characteristics of demographics vulnerable to radicalization, the key ISIS actors that carry potential threats, and the current state of government counter-terrorism measures. Taking case studies and conclusions from the most recent research on Indonesian terrorism, the paper highlights the importance of what is termed the saturation point, social bonds, and economic incentives as factors that pushes individuals to interact with radical organizations. It also points out key individuals and cells of pro-ISIS terrorist organizations that most effectively take advantage of these factors; including their origin and how they cooperate. The last segment of the paper also provides notes on the lack of the current Indonesian counter-terrorism; such as the vague division of labor in the National Counter-Terrorism Agency and the anti-terrorism law that is insensitive to pressing issues of online radicalization and ex-terrorist reintegration.

Indonesia has long been a bedrock of Islamic extremist ideologies and movements. From the emergence of Darul Islam (DI) in 1942 to the most recent formation of Jema'ah Anshorut Daulah (JAD) in 2015, terrorist groups have been a constant fixture in the Indonesian security landscape. Despite a strong effort from the Indonesian government to curb them, the country has laid witness to the constant rise, regrouping, and resurgence of terrorist groups. This is currently further exacerbated with the prominence of ISIS ideologies; the group shifted old influential actors, highlighted new ones, and revamped the spirit of jihadis with a new and robust ideology. To identify the scope of threat of the current Indonesian terrorist network this paper attempts to explain 3 important issue; the characteristics of vulnerable recruitment targets of terrorist groups, the identification of key actors in Indonesia's ISIS terrorist network, and a reflection of Indonesia's security responses to terrorism.

Indonesia's Terrorist Recruitment Target

Many analysis on group/individual radicalization often takes cases and samples from either a Muslim minority country or one that is conflict-ridden. As a result, the attempt to identify demographics that are vulnerable to terrorist recruitment often conclude to groups/individuals that are either structurally disenfranchised,[2] psychologically traumatized, or carry the need of revenge against an enemy.[3] Such analysis carry questionable significance in Indonesia as the country cannot be characterized by neither. Among the total population, almost 87.2% are Muslims,[4] and, outside from the localized conflict in Maluku and Aceh which was resolved in early 2000s, conflict in Indonesia made no significant and prolonged concern. In identifying vulnerable target groups, the most recent research reports from Wahid Foundation and CSIS Indonesia can provide several important insights.

Although there is no single physical or demographic characteristics of Indonesia's society that could become easy targets of radical groups' recruitment, admittedly, there are several identifying traits of groups that are more likely to be influenced. According to the survey done by Wahid Institute and Indonesia Survey Circle, social groups that are more susceptible to radical ideologies share several characteristics; they believe in a literalist understanding of the concept of jihad as a struggle with violence (*jihad qital*); they justify and show verbal support to radical groups; they deny or oppose the rights of citizenship of other groups that are not favored; and they are highly exposed to religious preaching which contains suspicion and hatred towards other religious or ethnic groups.[5] The result of the same study also revealed that those who have low level education (primary and secondary school) and obtain a monthly income less than IDR 1 million (US$ 80) are more prone to follow radical ideology. Although it needs to be carefully noted that the direct correlation between radicalization and education and economic status was not established.

The in-depth study conducted by CSIS Indonesia further revealed that the process in which individuals interact with radical groups and ideologies in Indonesia are influenced by several key factors.[6] The first factor is an existential anxiety of one's life experience which is marked by the inability of an individual to find meaning in his/her life and reflective questions related to the meaning and purpose of life, or death. This situation is termed as the "saturation point" and is commonly found to derive from

personal problems such as boredom at work or domestic life as opposed to the popularly argued realization of structural marginalization. This saturation point is what then compels individuals to move towards a deeper understanding of religion that, they hope, would provide them meaningful life purpose and/or identity and decrease their existential anxiety. This saturation point ultimately leads the individuals to join the gathering of radical groups, be it online or offline, and, as time goes by, increases participation in the group's activities.

One example is the case of a radicalized Indonesian migrant worker in Hong Kong that originated from Dieng. Her limited daily mobility and mundane activities in the factories is compensated by searching religious sermons in social media and religious events which led her to interact with ISIS-affiliated groups and ideologies. A similar saturation point was felt by a female deportee who was bored with her successful career as an insurance manager and, despite having enough wealth to finance his six children to live and vacation abroad, she opted to go to Syria to live in what she called as a 'promised land'.[7] The research, however, has not been able to draw out assertive reasons why an individual would choose a radical religious gathering as opposed to a moderate one. Several interviews have identified that the inability of individuals to differentiate between differing religious interpretations and the fact that radical groups have a "deeper" and "more detailed" interpretation of religion than moderate counterparts in Indonesia is a common reason why individuals do so.

The second factor that makes individuals susceptible to interaction with radical groups is the pull of terrorist groups in the form of social bonds. Various writings have noted social bonds as an important factor to the creation of an affective tie that binds the person to a group and, with the constant interaction between him/her and the members, an acceptance of its ideology. Even some would argue that the development of a strong affective tie between the individual and group members is a necessary prerequisite for the individual's acceptance of the groups' ideology.[8] In Indonesia, this social bond is key. Many of those interviewed pointed out a social relation that convinced them to enter a particular religious gathering or a particular online group which eventually exposed and convinced them to radical teachings and ideologies. Many ex-terrorists along with their wives, state that the social bond and sense of belonging they have to their former terrorist networks and contacts,

contrasted with the lack of social acceptance that they attain from the general population, is one of a key reason why they decide not to severe ties with their former relations.

One of the most common social bond women have in intolerant and radical groups is through marriage bonds. It was found that women that are linked to the Jema'ah Islamiyah (JI) network in Depok and the JAD network in Solo and Malang are all exposed to the group via their husbands. Although, this does not negate examples where women are tied through friendship, such as the migrant worker from Dieng that eventually made formal membership to the JAD network through introduction of a female friend she met on Telegram. For men, such bond is often kinship (i.e. uncle or brother) or social camaraderie. The example of this is the brothers of JI who engaged in the 2002 Bali Bombing, where the attack's mastermind Amrozi is the younger brother of Muhammad Gufron who helped with the logistics,[9] the older brother of Ali Imron who decided on the bombing spot and the step brother of Ali Fauzi who executed the bomb.[10] However, there are also instances where it is their spouse that introduce them to the terrorist network, such as the case of a mother in Bogor, West Java who successfully influence her family to go to Syria[11].

The third driving factor that exposes individuals to radical groups is economic needs, which, although not as strong as other factors, remains an important reason why individuals maintain contact with radical groups. The factor of economic needs affects individuals in two ways. Firstly, they attract people to join terrorist groups, or in the least, maintain interaction with individuals who are affiliated with them. A case note that an individual stayed in a relative's radical religious gathering because this relative is one who offers loans to his business, and an interview in Malang revealed that an individual was lured to fight for ISIS in Syria due to the perception of better economic situation there. Second, is by forcing individuals to maintain interaction with the terrorist network that they are trying to get rid of. Wives of ex-terrorists in Solo who open small businesses often depend on a limited number of consumers. By the time an intolerant and radical group becomes a customer and begins to get closer, the woman finds it hard to resist. It was noted that although some wives of the ex-terrorists often refuse them coming into their house, at times it becomes hard as they are the most loyal customers.[12] Understandably, poverty is not a sufficient factor *per*

se, as not all people who are in need of economic support would readily join radical groups. Therefore, arguably, it requires a specific amalgamation of the economic push factor, mixed with turning point and social relations factors, to compel individuals to join radical groups.

Indonesia's ISIS Connection

But as noted by many, the key towards radicalization does not merely rest in individual drives. Another key factor in having them radicalized is whether they interact with a radical group,[13] be it physically with members of the group offline or just their disseminated ideology online. It is thus also important to identify the radical actors that are on the other end of the equation. Over the years, there has been around 11 well-known terrorist organizations that have posed threats to the country.[14] But with the purge of organizations between 2003-2013, the ones that still have an active structure now, is half that number. Out of them, there are 4 key groups that connect the Indonesian society to ISIS.

The first of these groups is the Forum Aktivis Syariat Islam (Islam Sharia Activists Forum, FAKSI) and its affiliated online media Al-Mustaqbal. Although FAKSI was formally established in 2013 by Muhammad Fachry, its history goes back to 2006 with the establishment of the organization Al Mujahirun. Al Mujahirun is affiliated to a British based organization headed by Omar Bakri going by the name of Al-Muhajiroun that advocates for the establishment of a caliphate and the legalization of violence. FAKSI's strategy in Indonesia was originally to only disseminate pro-ISIS content through offline and online platforms. It was found, however, that FAKSI also sent their individuals to fight directly with ISIS in Syria, namely Bahrun Syah and Salim Mubarok.[15] It was reported that the two individuals have formed an Indonesian-Malaysian ISIS unit in Syria and have eventual plans to establish a caliphate on the archipelago. To date the two individuals are still there and have been known to coordinate attacks in Indonesia, such as 2016's Thamrin Bombing.

Despite its long history and affiliation to ISIS ideologies however, FAKSI is not the best known and most respected organization and actor for terrorists in regard to their support for ISIS. This title falls to the second key group, Tauhid Wal Jihad, an

unstructured pro-ISIS community headed by Aman Abdurrahman. Abdurrahman himself is one of the most respected individual in the Indonesian ISIS network for his work as the earliest and, to date, most trusted translator and disseminator of ISIS work and ideology in Indonesia. Many to this day perceive Abdurrahman as the glue of disparate elements of the Indonesian ISIS network.[16] Many of his followers have been noted to play important roles in other Indonesian organization such as the MIB,[17] Lintas Tanzim,[18] and Front Pembela Islam (Islam Defenders Front, FPI) branch in Lamongan, while Aman himself has become a vital strategic actor in many others, including the previously mentioned FAKSI. One of the key success of Aman Abdurrahman, however, was his feat of winning over Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the historically famous and charismatic figure in Indonesian terrorism, to support ISIS.

With the shift of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's affiliation, his organization, the Jema'ah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT), is now the third key actor in Indonesia's ISIS network. Ba'asyir's change of affiliations occurred in 2014 after he sent several JAT members to Syria to assess whether the organization needed to pledge loyalty (*bai'at*) to ISIS. After coming back, and finding the representatives having differing views, it was reported that the tipping point of Ba'asyir's consideration was the constant communication he had with Abdurrahman by phone.[19] Eventually on July 2014, Ba'asyir did *bai'at* to ISIS. This, however, resulted into the split of JAT with majority of the group disagreeing with him and forming a new organization, the Jema'ah Ansharusy Syariah (JAS), led by Muhammad Achwan and Abdurrahim Ba'asyir (Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's son). Although the JAT is now stripped of its majority of infrastructures and members, there are still some that remain such as the Darusy Syahadah Islamic boarding school in Sukoharjo. To date, it is the JAT, as opposed to the bulkier JAS, that is active in conducting attacks.

The last key organization in Indonesia's ISIS network is the FPI branch in Lamongan which is headed by Siswanto. It needs to be noted that the case of FPI Lamongan is an outlier to the whole structure of FPI in general. Despite their often recorded use of violence, FPI is not commonly considered as a terrorist group, let alone an affiliate of ISIS, as the establishment of a caliphate was never their goal. The Lamongan branch however is an exception due to the existence of Siswanto, who was a former student

of Aman Abdurrahman. To date, however there is little activity of FPI Lamongan in relation to terrorist attacks.

In 2015, there occurred the amalgamation of Tauhid Wal Jihad, the JAT, and FPI Lamongan into one terrorist group, the JAD. Although its spiritual leaders are still Aman Abdurrahman and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, since they have been jailed, the designated leader of the group is a man named Abu Husna, a former and well respected JAT member. The group thus far has recruited FAKSI along with its online media Al-Mustaqbal, and changed its name several times, interchangeably using the name Jema'ah Anshorul Khilafah (JAK) and Khalifah Syuhada.[20] Having combined members (some of which are still directly in contact with ISIS in Syria, such as FAKSI's Bahrun Syah and Salim Mubarok), structures (especially with the residual infrastructure of JAT), and their leader's charismatic influence (Abdurrahman and Ba'asyir), JAD can be currently regarded as one of the most active and threatening Indonesian terrorist organization. Its network conducted the most recent attacks in Indonesia including the Thamrin Bombing in 2016[21] and the Kampung Melayu Bombing in 2017,[22] and its influence has reached individuals outside of the Java mainland (i.e. East Kalimantan) and invigorated new demographies (i.e. women and children) to actively participate in suicide attacks.[23]

An additional connection that links Indonesia's society to ISIS is the Indonesian Syrian deportees; individuals who attempted to enter Syria to join the caliphate but failed to do so as they were caught in bordering countries (mostly Turkey) and returned to Indonesia. The number estimated by the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of International Affairs, and the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme, BNPT) is around 500 individuals, with 72% of these being women and children.[24] Although these people have not been found to be directly affiliated to ISIS, the lack of thorough supervision the government has towards them leaves the possibility of their contact with ISIS or ISIS-affiliated groups in Indonesia wide open. It has been noted by several NGOs tasked to keep watch over these deportees that some have gone missing and never to be seen again.[25]

National Security Responses and Development

Indonesia's counter-terrorism efforts can be quickly broken down to 3 phases. The first phase was pre-2002 in which the state saw terrorism as a domestic criminal problem and tasked the Indonesian Police (Polisi Republik Indonesia, Polri) to deal with the issue under general criminal law in coordination with the National Intelligence Agency. The second phase was post-2002, after the first Bali Bombing, when the state finally decided to ratify a national counter-terrorism bill under the name of Law No. 15/2003 on Counter Terrorism and Combating Terrorism and established the Desk Koordinasi Penanganan Terorisme (Counter Terrorism Coordination Desk, DKPT) and Datasemen Khusus (Special Detachment, Densus) 88. This era marked a change in the approach to Indonesia's fight against terrorism, as now terrorism is recognized as a part of global threat as opposed to an internal problem, that needs to be countered through international cooperation in both intelligence and police operations. A third phase started in 2010 with the reformation of the DKPT into the BNPT with the Presidential Regulation No. 46/2010. With the law, several things changed; BNPT is given more special authority to coordinate counter-terrorism strategies; BNPT is given authority to address preventive measures to radicalization; and, most importantly, the Indonesian National Military (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) is now involved in the national effort of counter-terrorism, particularly in the 2nd division of BNPT which focuses on deradicalization.[26]

Until today, the body that has been spearheading Indonesian government's fight against terrorism is the BNPT. Currently, they are using two approaches as their strategy to counter terrorism in Indonesia; both soft approach and hard approach.[27] The soft approach, done by the 2nd division of BNPT, addresses vulnerable groups and ex-terrorists, deals with deradicalization initiatives and disseminates counter narratives efforts using digital media and interfaith dialogue. On the other hand, the hard approach, commonly done by the 1st division of BNPT with Densus 88, addresses the security issues in combating terrorism, working on the intelligence gathering, detection, investigation, and prosecution of terrorist acts and network.

The BNPT's soft approach encompasses various programs including the establishment of *Pusat Media Damai* (Peace Media Center), Cyber Peace Ambassador Initiative, and the BNPT Video Festival which carries the purpose to involve youth influencers as

agent of peace through creating and promoting counter narratives in the internet. This program includes workshops on producing positive contents by using simple everyday language to promote peace among youths and countering the spread of hate speech and propaganda by radical groups. Since its establishment in 2015, this initiative has been implemented in several cities in Indonesia, including Jakarta, Bandung, Padang and Jogjakarta.[28] Aside from engaging to youths, BNPT also conducts programs that target religious preachers. Cooperating with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the BNPT is planning to hold a roadshow in 32 provinces with a target participation from around 3000-5000 religious preachers, hoping to utilize religious preacher's strategic role in counter-terrorism due to their position and interaction with the society and their ability to access even those who are living in remote areas. It is hoped that their involvement could create an early detection system and help to reach vulnerable groups in raising their awareness on radicalism.[29] Aside from them, the BNPT is also cooperating with former terrorists and foreign religious preachers to counsel current terrorist inmates as a part of their deradicalization program, along with providing them economic assistance and capital.[30]

However, Indonesia's counter-terrorism measures have yet to prove their effectiveness in dealing with terrorist resurgence. Although the BNPT, along with Densus 88, have been successful in arresting and demobilizing terrorist cells, the same cannot be said for their effort in deradicalizing and preventing the radicalization of individuals. Many have noted that this is due to the government's inability to respond to the rapid technological and ideological advances that has led to changes in the recruitment patterns and narratives used by radical groups, especially when compared to the trends in the early 2000s. The current counter-terrorism law, for example, has yet to have regulation to manage incoming Syrian deportees, or the comprehensive use of multiple encrypted social media and applications to distribute radical ideologies, or even specific response to those aiding terrorist perpetrators.[31] The BNPT's deradicalization efforts themselves have been noted by many to be tokenistic and to target the wrong demographic (focusing on strengthening tolerant individuals and instead of engaging with potentially radicalized demographic).[32] Deradicalization efforts in jails are in practice impeded because correctional facilities lack funding and training from the BNPT to specifically handle terrorist inmate's deradicalization and monitoring. Furthermore, institutional rivalries between the TNI

and the Polri that often impede the efficacy of their cooperation have not been clearly addressed in the BNPT.[33] Until today, jurisdiction of authority between the two institutions in BNPT have yet to be outlined, leading to obscurity and vague overlaps in their division of labor.

The developing threat of ISIS in Indonesia, marked particularly by the Thamrin Bombing in January 2016, has called for amendments on anti-terrorism law. The amendment of anti-terrorism law is still ongoing and has not yet been ratified until writing of this paper. So far, there are 17 additional points in the proposed amendments, including sanctions for participating in aiding for terrorist acts, organizing paramilitary training and terrorist recruitment, and producing or disseminating radical material, and the revocation of citizenship for Indonesian citizens who join paramilitary training or terrorist acts abroad. Currently, two points in the proposed amendment have been agreed by Indonesian government and House of Representative; points aiming to strengthening BNPT authority, and to give authority to TNI to be involved in counter-terrorism operations which previously was the sole authority of the Polri in the 1st division of BNPT.

However, the proposed amendments have not addressed the more pressing issues, such as the use of social media to disseminate radical ideology and to recruit members, deportees and returning foreign terrorist fighters, disengagement from terrorist networks, and the reintegration of former terrorists into society. The amendments have also yet to address the division of labor between BNPT, the Polri, and the TNI in combating terrorism. While the involvement of the highly trained counter-terrorism detachment forces within the army, navy, and air force,[34] would surely enhance the capacity of Indonesia to combat the growing terrorism threat, it will not work unless there are clear boundaries between the specific roles of the TNI and Polri.

Indonesia Moving Forward

Moving forward, Indonesia needs to adapt faster in anticipating the changing trends of terrorist recruitment and mobilization. Aside from addressing the economic needs of its society, it also needs to create programs that provide meaning and increase the

social bonds individuals have with their community. This could begin with addressing correctly the important details in the amendment of the current counter-terrorism law, making sure that clear boundaries are set within the BNPT, and sound regulations are made to provide more room and clarity for the security apparatus to deal with Indonesia's surviving ISIS network. If not, although we might see decline and splintering of terrorist groups, the time would be far when Indonesia sees their eradication altogether.

Recommendation and Policy Suggestions

How can Europe and Italy help in contrasting and preventing jihadist radicalisation in Asia?

- Central Asia is one of the main hotbeds of Salafi jihadist foreign fighters who joined the conflict in Syria and Iraq. European national governments and the European Union could provide funding and expertise to train local actors in order to prevent radicalization in schools, prisons and in any other contexts in which social, economic and cultural factors may create a fertile ground for the rise of violent ideologies.

- Since defeated fighters are now returning from the front lines, it is paramount that Europe gives support, in terms of know-how, in countering terrorism. Italy has long endured violence from extremist and terrorist groups in its recent history; its experience could be an important tool to strengthen political stability and human rights.

- Europe must pay great attention when selecting its partners. One of the main risks in the prevention of jihadi radicalization in Asia is engaging with and supporting CSOs that are financially supported by private donors and non-governmental or governmental Islamic charities, with the aim of spreading a Wahabi, Salafi and extremist agenda.

- It is important to emphasize that defeating a terrorist group militarily does not necessarily mean eliminating the conditions for its possible rebirth. It is vital to understand and address the ideology that drives jihadist groups and provide effective alternative/counter narratives to ensure that individual and societal grievances - whether real or perceived – are not used as a justification for engaging in violence.

- The attention paid by jihadi groups for the suffering of people inside refugees camps could stimulate Europe to reinforce its assistance at the benefit of the countries who host them and have to face the critical factors related to their

maintenance;

- Aware that the radicalization is a serious threat which affect Asia as well, European and Italian authorities could engage their Asian counterparts for creating multilateral project of sharing expertise and benchmarks, in order to set a cooperation built on the best practice that each part can put together;

- The synergy existing between Europe and Asia makes extremism and radicalization a common threat for both continents. Therefore, the need for a better holistic understanding of such an important phenomenon could incentive European and Asian countries to start mechanism of sharing information and regular meetings among experts. Rising discussions and debate about terrorism and violence related to jihadi radicalization could help to create a common sense which could be the base for elaborating a collaborative approach to these issues

- As it seems that South Asia will be one of the most crucial scenario for the future evolution of jihadism, a country like Italy which is already present in the area could be a strategic player in helping regional interlocutors in facing this challenge. Indeed, Italian Armed Forces have been in Afghanistan since more than ten years and have been recognized internationally as a key player for the harsh stabilization of the western parts of the country. In addition to training and advisory efforts in Afghanistan currently ongoing, our country could implement the cooperation agreement with Pakistan, in order to share with Pakistani police force and authorities skills and know how to be used inside the national strategy of anti-terrorism, counter-terrorism and de-radicalization.

Biographies

Gabriele Iacovino

Gabriele Iacovino is the Director at Ce.S.I. – Centre for International Studies. He entered the Institute in 2010 as analyst of Middle East and North Africa and became the Coordinator of all the analysis wing of the Institute in 2013. His fields of analysis include geopolitics and security in North Africa and Middle East, jihadi terrorism and deradicalization and global issues.

He holds a Masters in International Relations and a degree in Political Science both obtained at the LUISS University of Rome and a Masters in Peacekeeping and Security Studies from the University of Roma Tre.

Mr. Iacovino has been frequently interviewed as commentator on national and international TV and Radio broadcasts.

Francesca Manenti

Analyst in charge for Asia and Pacific affairs at the Institute and author of publications on subject of her expertise. Her field of analysis includes political, security and geo-economic dynamics in Iran, South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia.

Graduated in International and European Politics at Cattolica University of Milan in 2012, she had a Master in Economic Security, Geopolitics and Intelligence issued by SIOI (Società Italiana per le Organizzazioni Internazionali) in Rome.

She entered Ce.S.I. in 2013 as intern and then she gained experience through the fellowship program. As Analyst of Ce.S.I., Ms Manenti has been invited several times in Asian countries (Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Vietnam, China), both for attending international conferences and for meetings with foreign Institutions and Institutes.

Ms Manenti is also an expert commentator for Italian national TV and Radio programs, both public and private (RAI, Mediaset, TV2000, Radio Vaticana, Radio1Rai, etc).

Francesco Farinelli

Francesco Farinelli's work focuses on the role of ideology, propaganda and fake news in media narratives and examines the relationship between history and fiction. His experience includes the study of radicalisation processes leading to terrorism related to the phenomenon of the Red Brigades in Italy and specifically the role of the media in this context. Farinelli earned a Bachelor degree in Performing Arts and a Master's degree from the University of Bologna, Italy. In 2013 he completed his doctorate in History in the framework of the joint international program on "Humanism, Neo-Humanism and Post-Humanism in the Age of Media," of the University of Bologna and Brown University (USA).

Asadullah Khan

Mr. Asad Ullah Khan is working as a Research Associate at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad. He holds an M.Sc in International Relations from National Defence University, Islamabad. He also holds a degree of Certified Accounting Technician from the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants, Glasgow U.K. He has previously worked as a research associate at the Centre for Pakistan and Gulf Studies, Islamabad. Mr. Khan is an author of various newspaper articles. He has also co-authored a chapter, with Mr. Rahim Ullah Yousufzai, for a book titled "Militancy in FATA: Cultural and Religious Dimensions".

Mohammad Humayun Kabir

Mohammad Humayun Kabir is Director General of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) and Head of its Research Faculty (since 2009). Mr. Kabir is former Research Director of Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) and Head of its Strategic Studies Division (1983-2009). His academic disciplines are International Relations and International Law. The areas of his research interests are foreign policy, national/regional/international security, UN peacekeeping, security sector development, civil-military relations, governance issues, international water

issues, and Islamist radicalism. With about thirty six years of experience in research and academic administration, Mr. Kabir has to his credit about sixty research works, including books/book chapters, monographs and journal articles published in several countries of South Asia, Europe and North America, as well as many unpublished research works. He is a co-author of two recent radicalism-related reports: Towards Developing a Counter Radicalization Policy for Bangladesh (June 2016, Dhaka); Towards Developing a Counter-Narrative to the Islamist Extremist Narrative in Bangladesh (November 2016, Dhaka). He is a recipient of several educational/research/training awards such as the Commonwealth Scholarship (in Oxford, UK), the Ford Foundation Fellowship (in India, Sri Lanka and Singapore) and the Senior Fulbright Scholarship (in Boston, USA). He has conducted research in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, the U.K. and the U.S.A. Mr. Kabir has attended a large number of seminars and conferences in Bangladesh and abroad and presented a number of research papers. He is an alumnus of the Near East and South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies of the National Defense University in Washington D.C., USA, as well as the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), Honolulu, Hawaii. Mr. Kabir has traveled widely in East, Southeast, South, Central and West Asia, North Africa, Europe and North America.

Ashish Banik

Mr. Ashish Banik, Deputy Director of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, has been working on foreign policy and security issues since October 2009. He completed his graduation (2007) and post-graduation (2009) from the Department of International Relations of the University of Dhaka. He regularly contributes in News Papers and Journals and presents research papers on topical security issues, regional and sub-regional issues in various national and international seminars. He has three research articles published in Journals. He has visited some countries in South Asia and East Asia.

Alif Satria

Alif Satria is a research assistant in the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. He has been involved in several projects including projects on radicalism and intolerance among women in Indonesia, identification of actors and networks of Indonesia's radical Islamic movement, and Indonesia's atrocities crime risk assessment. He focuses on terrorism, political violence, and identity politics in Indonesia.

Fitriani

Fitriani is a researcher in the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Her previous research has delved on the issue of terrorism in tourism, female radicalization assessment in Indonesia, and women participation in peacekeeping. She focuses on defense and security in Asia Pacific, women in peace and security, non-traditional security, as well as Indonesia politics and foreign policy.

Pricilia Putri Nirmalasari

Pricilia Putri Nirmalasari is a project research assistant in the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. She was involved in a research project on radicalism and intolerance among women in Indonesia. Her research interests include international security, migration, politics of identity, gender and regionalism.

Rebekha Adriana

Rebekha Adriana is a project research assistant in the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Her previous research studies include the issue of terrorism in tourism, and female radicalization assessment in Indonesia. Her research interests evolve around digital anthropology, people-to-people relations, and culture.

Notes

The Evolution of Jihadi Terrorism from al-Qaeda to Daesh
by Francesco Farinelli (EFD – European Foundation for Democracy)

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[9] Cfr. M. Emiliani, *Medio Oriente: una storia dal 1918 al 1991*, Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2012.

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[15] Ivi, p. 5.

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[17] F. Falconi, A. Sette, *Osama bin Laden: il terrore dell'Occidente*, Fazi, 2011, p. 140.

[18] Cfr. D. Byman, *Al Quaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement*, cit., p. 25.

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[20] Cfr. A. Orsini, *Isis*, Rizzoli, 2016, pp. 121-123.

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[22] Cfr. A Plebani, *From the terrorist group to self-proclaimed state: the origins and evolution of IS*, in *Daesh and the terrorist threat: from the Middle East to Europe*, cit., p. 34.

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[28] P. Nesser, A. Stenersen, E. Oftedal, *Jihadi Terrorism in Europe: The IS-Effect*, in «Perspectives on Terrorism», Vol. 10, No. 6, 2016.

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The Future of International Jihadi Terrorism
by Gabriele Iacovino (Ce.S.I. – Centre for International Studies)

[1] From Afghanistan against USSR, to Former Yugoslavia during the civil war, to Iraq after the fall of Saddam's regime, finally, to Syria nowdays.

[2] Richard Barrett, *Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees*, The Soufan Group.

[3] David E. Sanger and Mark Mazzetti, *New Estimate of Strength of al-Qaeda is Offered*, The New York Times, 30 June 2010.

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[5] When AQAP tried to establish a caliphate in Yemen, Osama bin Laden wrote a letter to Nasir al-Wuhayshi, the leader of the group, saying: "Establishing the [caliphate]before the elements necessary for success are put in place most often will lead to aborting the effort. Weighing people down with something that exceeds their expectations is fraught with negative results" (*Osama to Atiyah, letter dated July 17, 2010*, ODNI documents, Abbotabad, released in May 2015).

[6] For example in 2010 al-Qaeda ideologue Abu Zaid al-Kuwaiti began releasing a series during Ramadan touching upon basic religious duties and obligations. He would later also put out a regular dawa video series, released by al-Qaeda between 2011 and 2013. Similarly, AQAP ideologue Muhammad al-Mirshadi had a number of dawa video series, starting in 2010 until his death (in a January 2015 drone strike).

[7] Currently, two main terrorist acronyms are active in the Sahel - Sahara region: Jamaa Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims – GSIM) and the Islamic State, the latter through its two branches of the Great Sahara (IS - GS) and West Africa (IS - WA. All these organizations are particularly strong and rooted in the rural areas and in the smaller villages of the Sahelian countries, while maintaining operative cells and dens in the most populous capitals and urban centers.
The GSIM, an organization part of the Qaedist network, is a real jihadist cartel that brings together and coordinates the activities of the Saharan brigade of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, of the Liberation Front of the Macina (FLM), of Ansar al-Din (The protectors of the Faith) and al-Mourabitun (the Sentinels). AQMI, commanded by Djamel Okacha (Yahya Abu Hammam), is mainly composed of Algerian militias, is active mainly in southern Algeria and has both operational and logistical tasks, in particular to maintain contact between the Qaedist leadership of Kabilia and provide assistance to non-Algerian groups in the regional network.

[8] "*Osama bin Laden's Son Urges Attacks on the West*," CNN, August 14, 2015.

[9] The Islamic State's English-language propaganda magazine Dabiq referred to bin Ladin using the honorific "Sheikh" and included photos of him. Dabiq, Issue 4, pp. 43-33

[10] Eric Schmitt, "*Al Qaeda Turns to Syria, With a Plan to Challenge ISIS*", The New York Times, May 15, 2016.

[11] Adam Goldman "*Top al-Qaeda operatives freed in prisoner swap with Iran*", Washington Post, September 18, 2015.

[12] "*Bin Laden's son calls Muslims to Syria jihad*", The National, September 15, 2017.

The Competition between al-Qaeda and Daesh for the Asian Stronghold
by Francesca Manenti (Ce.S.I. – Centre for International Studies)

[1] Kevin Bell *Usama Bin Ladin's "Father Sheikh:" Yunus Khalis And The Return Of Al-Qa`Ida's Leadership To Afghanistan*, The Combating Terrorism Center At West Point, May 2013. Local leaders were interested in maintaining stable the province as they ha economic stake deriving from the smuggling of products towards the Jalalabad Airport and the Torkham Gate (Khyber Pass) toward Pakistan.

[2] Cathy Scott-Clark and Adrian Levy *The Exile. The Stunning Inside Story of Osama bin Laden al Al Qaeda in Flight*, Bloomsbury 2017.

[3] Pashtunwali is the code of life of Pashtun people. It is based on eleven moral principles that regulate the behavior of members of Pashtun tribes. Among them, two of the most important are *melmastia* (hospitality) and *nanawatai* (asylum).

[4] According to Mahfouz Ibn El Waleed, Osama's spiritual adviser called also the Mauritanian, Taliban's leader, Mullah Omar told Bin Laden that their government needed time to gain international support as well as to raise funds and recruits, in order to become stronger. It used the Kandahari expression "our donkey is in the mud".

[5] It was an American destroyer which was being refueled in Aden's harbor on 12th October 2000. It was attacked by a boat carrying C4 explosive and two suicide bombers. The explosion killed 17 sailors and hurt 39 people on board.

[6] Among the training facilities, the most famous were: Khalid bin Waleed and Muwavia, in Khost, destroyed by US retaliation the terrorist attacks against US embassies in Kenya and in Tanzania; al-Farouq Camp, in Helmand (built after 1998 to replace those in Khost); in Kandahar, Abu Obaida, near the first al-Qaeda guesthouse Tarnak Qila, and the so called House of Martyrs, where the organization coerced suicide bombers; the already mentioned Najim al-Jihad (called by Bin Laden's family Star Wars) in Paktika; the facility set up by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi near Herat, at the border with Iran.

[7] Angel Rabasa, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Sara A. Daly, Heather S. Gregg, Theodore W. Karasik, Kevin A. O'Brien, William Rosenau *Beyond al-Qaeda. The global Jihadist Movement*, RAND Project Air Force 2006.

[8] It is known as "Declaration of Jihad against Jews and Crusader" and was signed, as well as by Bin Laden and Rahman, by Ayman al-Zawahiri, at that time still the leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad group, Refa'i Ahmed Taha (alias Abu Yasser al-Masri).

[9] FATA is a semi-autonomous region in northwestern Pakistan, which is ruled by the Constitution with the same rules framed as the Frontier Crimes Regulation by British Empire in 1901. The law excludes any role of Pakistani parliament in ruling FATA and states that only the President is authorized to amend laws and promulgate ordinances for the tribal areas (meaning that no law approved by the National Assembly is valid in FATA without President's consent). On behalf of the President, the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa exercises the federal authority in FATA. Before 2001, the maintenance of law and order and the border control were up to the paramilitary Frontier Corp, but the deterioration of the security conditions following the war in Afghanistan brought Pakistan Army to enter the area. In March 2017 Pakistani government approved the recommendation for reforming FATA, which includes the merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the repeal of the frontier Crimes Regulation.

[10] The border between the two countries is named after Sir Mortimer Durand, British diplomat, who in 1893 agreed on the division between the Kingdom of Afghanistan and British India with the then Emir of Afghanistan, Abdur Rehman Khan.

[11] TTP was blamed for plotting the attempted car bombing in Time Square, New York, in May 2010.

[12] According to US officials, in 2016 there were almost 300 al-Qaeda's fighters in Afghanistan, excluding facilitator and sympathizers of the network. In October 2015, US and Afghan Forces conducted assault operations against two al-Qaeda's facilities in Sorabak district of Kandahar, killing more than 150 militants, belonging to various groups. The facilities were used for advanced training, such as weapons training (small arms to advanced explosive training, indirect fire), chemistry to produce advanced explosives, and higher level sniper training. https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/10/al-qaedas-kandahar-training-camp-probably-the-largest-in-afghan-war.php

[13] https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/al-qacc84_idah-in-the-indian-subcontinent-22code-of-conduct22-en.pdf

[14] Mualna Fazlullah was elected Emir of TTP in 2014, after the death of his precedecessor, Hakimullah Mehsud.

[15] Borhan Osman *The Islamic State in "Khorasan": How it began and where it stands now in Nangarhar*, Afghanistan Analysts Network, July 2016

[16] After the disclosure of Mullah Omar's death in 2014, factionalism came up inside the group because of discords about the appointment of the new Emir. Both Mohammad Mansour (killed in 2015) and Haibatullah Akhunzdada (the current leader of the Taliban) haven't been recognized as Amir al Muminin (meaning "Commander of the Faithful") by some factions. Depending on its geogrphical location, the rebels groups reunited under different shuras: Shura of the North, whose authorty stretch almost from north-eastern Afghanistan to Kapisa, Laghman and Nangarahar; the Mashhad Shura, who rules on western Afghanistan, but it's present also partly in Helmand, Khandahar, Zabul and Ghazni and in thenorth (Faryab, Jowzjan and Kunduz); the Rasoolu Shura, which has residula support in the south and in the east of the country. See Antonio Giustozzi *Afghanistan: Taliban's organization and structure* Landinfo, August 2017

[17] Dhruva Jaishankar, *Assessing the Islamic State threat to India: It is a serious but manageable challenge*, Brookings, May 2017 https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/assessing-the-islamic-state-threat-to-india-it-is-a-serious-but-manageable-challenge/

ISIS in Pakistan: Myths and Realities
by Asadullah Khan (ISSI – Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad)

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[6] B. Hoffman, *Inside terrorism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999

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[19] Rs1.4bn released for Nacta, *The Nation*, 21st February 2017, http://nation.com.pk/national/21-Feb-2017/rs14bn-released-for-nacta
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[22] *Major among 4 Pakistan Army personnel martyred during operation in Upper Dir*, Dawn, 9th August, 2017, https://www.dawn.com/news/1350539
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The Evolution of Islamist Radicalization and Violent Extremism In Bangladesh
by Mohammad Humayun Kabir and Ashish Banik (BEI - Bangladesh Enterprise Institute)

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[2] Monirul Islam, presentation on "*Countering Violent Extremism in Bangladesh*" at BEI, Dhaka, on 29 October 2017.
[3] A man-made governance system that is considered evil.
[4] Frances Harrison, *Political Islam and the Election in Bangladesh*, p.87 http://commonwealth.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Publications/Section3.pdf

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The Transformation of the Jihadist Insurgency in the Philippines

by Francesca Manenti (Ce.S.I. – Centre for International Studies)

[1] The 92% of the population in the Philippines professed Catholicism.

[2] It's an educational and missionary movement born in India in 1926 by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, in order to contrast the spread of Hinduism. It derives from Deobandi interpretation of Islam and preaches strict religious orthodoxy. It operates in 150 countries and the total amount of its members is unknown.

[3] The name was chosen in honor of the Afghan warlord Abdul Rasul Sayyaf.

[4] The group had been structured by Janjalani around the Islamic Executive Council, the main planning and execution body composed by 15 emirs. It was divided in two committees: the Jamiatul al-Islamis Revolutionary Tabligh Group, in charge of fund-raising and Islamic education; the al-Misuratt Khutbah Committee, in charge of propaganda. See, R. C. Banloi *Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia*, Naval War College Reviwe, 2005.

The Current State of Terrorism in Indonesia: Vulnerable Groups, Networks, and Responses

by Alif Satria, Fitriani, Pricilia Putri Nurmala Sari, and Rebekha Adriana (CSIS - Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia)

[1] Alif Satria, Fitriani, Pricilia Putri Nirmala Sari, and Rebekha Adriana are members of the CSIS Indonesia research team that worked on the project "In-depth Research on Women Involvement in Intolerance and Radical Groups" in 2017.

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