EBSCO HOST

The Defeat of IS & the Southeast Asian Terrorist Threat

October 2017 has been a fateful month for the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group. In Syria, its de facto 'capital' Raqqa has fallen to an alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters backed by the US-led coalition. Earlier in Hawija, the last remaining IS stronghold in northern Iraq, about 1,000 IS fighters surrendered to Iraqi forces rather than fighting for 'martyrdom'. Over in Southeast Asia, the Philippines authorities announced the liberation of Marawi after a five-month battle and the killing of IS top leaders, Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute. The string of losses suffered by IS since 2016 nullifies and invalidates the IS slogan of 'remaining and expanding' and constitutes a huge symbolic blow to its standing as leader of the global 'jihadist' movement.

It is likely that the fall of Raqqa was expected by the top leadership of IS and that plans have been made well in advance for al-Baghdadi and his senior commanders to go into hiding, and for the 'jihadi' struggle to persist in some form in Iraq, Syria and elsewhere. This is already evident from IS' decentralisation of its 'jihad' and 'virtualisation' of its so-called caliphate (from a territory-based entity). The 'decentralisation of jihad' through its various wilayats and online presence (including videos and publications), is similar to Al-Qaeda's post-9/11 franchising strategy. IS has been urging its affiliates in different parts of the world to continue the so-called 'caliphate' project by granting them more autonomy and freedom to mount operations. Against this backdrop, Southeast Asia has to contend with the threat of IS and other terrorist groups engaging in recruitment and proselytisation, and planning attacks through the online domain.

This context necessitates close monitoring of hotspots in Southeast Asia, including Marawi in the Philippines, Rakhine in Myanmar and the southern provinces in Thailand. In the Philippines, security forces have successfully managed to contain, isolate and eliminate the IS threat in Marawi. Although the battle is almost over with the deaths of IS Philippines leaders Isnilon Hapilon and Omar Maute, the threat of terrorism in the region is far from over. **Rohan Gunaratna** discusses the situation in Marawi, the activities of the militants, the government's response and future trends. Despite the elimination of top leaders and fighters in Marawi, IS will prevail in Southern Philippines and pose a security threat to Southeast Asian countries as the leadership outside Mindanao remains intact. In addition, other militant groups are joining IS' East Asia Division, indicating efforts to expand from the Philippines to Northeast and Southeast Asia.

While IS has failed to hold territory, it has been successful in cyberspace, with regular online publications of battle news, 'religious' articles, showing exploits of IS fighters and propaganda videos. In this connection, **Jasminder Singh** and **Muhammad Haziq Bin Jani** discuss the unprecedented appearance of a Singaporean national in an IS-propaganda video last month and its possible implications. In the midst of IS decline in the Levant, the video attempts to rally the 'jihadists', boost their morale, and gives the false impression that IS will prevail. The video underlines the need for continued high-level vigilance against extremist teachings and 'jihadist' propaganda and radicalisation in the real world and the murky cyber world.

Muh Taufiqurrohman et al. examine the issue of jihadist radicalisation and activities in Indonesia's prisons at Nusa Kambangan. They observe that lax security measures, understaffed prison facilities, low budgetary provisions and overworked prison guards have enabled high-profile jihadists such as Aman Abdurrahman, Iwan Darmawan, Abdullah

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Sonata and Abu Hanifah to recruit, preach, communicate, plan and execute attacks without hindrance. They recommend placing terrorist inmates in special prisons or solitary confinement, employing full-time religious counsellors, recruiting more qualified prison guards and increasing the prisons' operational budget.

On the issue of radicalisation, a better conceptual understanding of the subject is required. **Paul Hedges** explores and clarifies key issues associated with the term radicalisation. He argues that radicalisation is largely linked to socialisation and that there is no commonly accepted personality profile nor a linear pathway to radicalisation; basically, the landscape and trajectory of terrorism in terms of recruitment and evolution are both changing and fluid. In order to counter the booming youth 'jihadist' cultural milieu, he argues that it is necessary to have credible moderate role models and voices messages that are packaged to appeal to the youth. He added that any response to address the issue of trajectories into violence needs to be measured, targeted, evidence-based, and empathetic to the communities involved.

Ending the Fight in Marawi

Rohan Gunaratna

Synopsis

The Philippines security forces with timely international military and intelligence assistance successfully managed to contain, isolate and eliminate the threat posed by the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group in Marawi City. With the Battle of Marawi drawing to a close in October, after the deaths of key leaders, such as Isnilon Hapilon and Omarkhayam Maute, IS will lose control in Marawi. However, ideologically IS will remain a threat to the Philippines through its followers and local affiliates. A continual regional response is necessary to prevent the spread and spillover effects of IS presence.

Overview

The conflict that began on 23 May, with IS-linked militants taking control of parts of the city, resulted in the killing of close to 700 local and foreign fighters by government and coalition forces during intense combat.

Initially, IS fighters in Marawi had compared themselves to the strength of the fighters that managed to hold Mosul since 2014. On 16 October, the conflict drew closer to an end with military snipers killing Isnilon Hapilon together with Omarkhayam Maute, the operational leader of IS, and four others.[1] The troops have been advancing slowly to minimise civilian casualties as well as to avoid sniper fire. Presently, IS fighters are holding two dozen hostages some of whom have been coerced into joining the group, while others adopted a fighting role in order to survive. On 16 October, 17 hostages (9

females, 7 children and 1 infant) were rescued.[2]

The IS fighters in Marawi, guided by IS central, adopted policies implemented by the group in Iraq and Syria. Some of the violent activities that IS fighters engaged in included burning a police station and the city jail to free the inmates and executing the chief of intelligence of Marawi. In addition, IS also occupied homes and raided shops, considering them as war booty to replenish their supplies. IS members took control of the St Mary's Cathedral and Dansalan college, and took Christian leaders, staff members and students hostage. Subsequently, in order to replicate IS execution methods and styles, the fighters made videos of members executing Christians wearing orange uniforms. IS fighters in the Philippines also engaged in sexual violence by forcing young female hostages as sex slaves and subjected them to humiliation.

The Battle of Marawi

On 23 May, the largest IS-centric groups - Islamic State Lanao (ISL) and Islamic State Philippines (ISP) – attempted to take control of Marawi.[3] The ISP led by Isnilon Hapilon, the former deputy leader of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), and ISL led by Abdullah Maute, engaged in a protracted battle with over 12,000 military and police personnel supported by US and Australian forces. Contrary to IS thinking, the Maranao people rejected IS presence and did not support their attempt to take over the city. This lack of public support severely weakened IS' ability to hold and extend control in Marawi. As such, ISP's project to establish a wilayat

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[1] The Straits Times. Philippines security forces kill two top terrorists, including ISIS chief in South-east Asia. October 16, 2016. Accessed from http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/leaders-of-marawi-war-killed-in-clashes-with-philippine-forces-defence-secretary.

[2] GMA News Online. Isnilon Hapilon, Omar Maute killed. October 16, 2017. Accessed from http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/629644/isnilon-hapilon-omar-maute-killed/story/.
[3] Joseph Hincks. The Battle for Marawi City. 2017. Accessed from http://time.com/marawi-philippines-isis/.

(province) in the country failed, despite months of preparation to stockpile weapons. Nonetheless the threat of IS persists, as multiple groups that pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi continue their activities in other parts of Mindanao.[4] As such, IS could possibly spread from Mindanao to Sabah in Malaysia and Eastern Indonesia, in light of the transnational nature of the threat.

The Hostage Crisis

When IS attacked Marawi, the group took nearly a hundred hostages. Although the Duterte government did not cave in to IS demands, the hostages were deemed critical to slow down the advance of the security forces. IS fighters had utilised the civilian hostages as 'human shields' and occupied mosques to prevent government forces from attacking their position.[5] On 23 May, Reverend Teresito 'Chito' Soganub, 51, was taken hostage along with other parishioners, by IS fighters. He was Vicar General of Marawi at the Prelature of Marawi and in the province of Lanao del Norte. On 30 May, Rev. Soganub appeared in a video stating that he was among more than 200 people, including women and children, who had been abducted.

Rev Soganub appealed to the President: "We are asking for your help to please give what they are asking for. To withdraw forces away from Lanao del Sur and Marawi City, and to stop the air attacks, and to stop the cannons."[6] Later, on 4 June, IS-linked news agency Amaq News showed the destruction of a Catholic church in Marawi. In the one minute and 52 seconds video, IS fighters were shown entering the church and destroying statues, crucifixes, books and furniture before setting fire to the building. On

16 September, after 117 days in captivity, Rev Soganub managed to escape from Bato Mosque and was rescued by operational troops.[7]

Rev. Soganub revealed that the hostages served as an additional source of manpower for IS. He stated that some were given firearms and were coerced to fight at the frontlines. The hostages were also ordered to ransack houses and stores, do menial tasks and run errands. Some of the hostages were also instructed to act as medical attendants for wounded fighters. The hostages were forced to convert to Islam or risk being killed - shot to death or beheaded. Rev Soganub was made to wear an orange uniform to emulate IS execution videos, but was spared from inclusion in the group of Christian carpenters who were executed. As of 1 October 2017, the government claimed that IS fighters had killed 47 civilians. In addition, after the fighting started in May, the civilians who were rescued or escaped were 1,730. At least 41 hostages were spread out in two locations - Lumber and Padian Port area; 14 of them were female hostages.

IS fighters in Marawi replicated the hostage-related activities of IS in Iraq and Syria. Female hostages, including girls as young as 13 years old, were either forced into marriages or exploited as sex slaves.[8] The AFP Intelligence verified the information provided by released hostages after intercepting radio transmissions of the terrorists. According to AFP intelligence, the young female hostages, were transported or visited by IS fighters and were referred to as 'goats'. Overall, the presence of hostages in the main battle area enabled IS to prolong the battle temporarily. Although IS executed a number of hostages, they kept the larger hostage population in roles that benefited IS position and fighters. However, regardless of the persistent threat of hostages being killed,

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[4] See Annex 1 for details of all groups and individuals that have pledged allegiance to and announced support for IS.

[5] The Straits Times. ISIS-linked terrorists sexually enslaving women, forcing civilians to fight and loot in Marawi. June 27, 2017. Accessed from http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/isis-linked-terrorists-sexually-enslaving-women-forcing-civilians-to-fight-and-loot-in.

[6] Felipe Villamor. Catholic Priest Abducted in the Philippines Appeals to President in a Video. New York Times. May 31, 2017. Accessed from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/31/world/asia/philippines-catholic-priest-hostage.html?_r=0.

[7] Raul Dancel. Catholic priest rescued from militants in Marawi says he is 'physically strong and handsome'. The Straits Times. September 18, 2017. Accessed from http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/catholic-priest-rescued-in-marawi-arrives-in-manila.

[8] The Straits Times. ISIS-linked terrorists sexually enslaving women, forcing civilians to fight and loot in Marawi. June 27, 2017. Accessed from http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/isis-linked-terrorists-sexually-enslaving-women-forcing-civilians-to-fight-and-loot-in.

the security forces continued their military strategy and attacked IS strongholds.

Decreasing Number of Fighters

According to the Armed Forces of the Philippines, since the attack on Marawi, many prominent and directing figures, including Abdullah Maute, Otto and Mahdi, have been killed, contributing to an end to the major part of the conflict. IS suffered a big loss with the deaths of experienced IS fighters and leaders in Marawi. Abdullah was the operational leader in Marawi until August 2017 when he was killed in combat.[9] Abdullah had lived and studied in Marawi, and led the fight under the symbolic leadership of Hapilon. Abdullah's brother Omarkhayam Maute who served as the deputy leader (deputy emir) of ISL succeeded him as the new operational leader of Marawi. Omarkhayam suffered injuries during the conflict in Marawi, but continued to resist and lead.

After the deaths of Abdullah, Hapilon, and Omarkhayam, it is very likely that Dr Mahmud bin Ahmed will assume leadership or continue to play an influential role. Earlier reports revealed that the chief advisor to Hapilon, Dr Mahmud bin Ahmed will conduct a suicide mission during the final battle with security forces.[10] It is evident that a number of the Moro fighters are no longer driven by Moro nationalism, but by IS ideology of believers fighting disbelievers. As they believe in 'martyrdom', the remaining IS fighters are likely to continue to fight until they are killed. The strategies of IS fighters in Marawi is likely to influence other IS groups in Mindanao.

Government Response

The Philippines' government has deployed at least 12,000 troops against IS in Marawi for five months. The IS-linked fighters in Marawi have particularly focused on conducting guerrilla-style attacks rather than killing

themselves and others in suicide missions. This approach of continuing to fight the security forces rather than surrender had delayed the end of the conflict in Marawi.[11]

Before the attack on Marawi, the local government had been denying the presence of IS in Mindanao. However, following the attack, the response of the government and armed forces was immediate, and led by President Rodrigo Duterte, Secretary of the National Defense Delfin Lorenzana, Armed Forces Chief General Eduardo Ano and Intelligence chief General Felimon T. Santos.

The fighting in Marawi has lasted for a period of more than four months because of three reasons. First, the government underestimated the strength of IS ideology and the group's fighting capabilities. IS had made extensive use of snipers and explosives devices to target the government, armed forces and civilians. Second, the areas under IS control could not be effectively cordoned and sealed. Third, the Philippine military units were trained for jungle and rural warfare and not urban warfare, focused in a city such as Marawi. Until August 2017, the infiltration and exfiltration of IS fighters from the Main Battle Area (MBA) enabled them to replenish the losses in numbers and weaponry. Initially, the fighters formed three layers of defence protecting Hapilon, Abdullah and Omarkhayam..

The Future: IS Threat in Philippines

Besides the IS groups engaged in the Marawi battle, the Philippines government has to contend with other IS-centric groups outside Marawi. The most active is the IS-directed Jamaah Mohajirin Wal Ansar (JMA), which has extensive links to foreign fighters,

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[9] Abdullah Maute is dead, says military. ABS-CBN News. September 5, 2017. Accessed from http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/05/17/abdullah-maute-is-dead-says-military.

[10] TODAY Online. Terrorist Mahmud still alive in Marawi, says Malaysia's top cop. June 23, 2017. Accessed from http://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/top-malaysian-terrorist-believed-killed-marawi.

[11] Interestingly, over 1000 IS fighters surrendered recently in Hawijah, IS' last stronghold in Iraq; earlier in Tal Afar, some 500 also surrendered. These and other surrenders in Iraq and Syria marked a significant departure from IS past tactics of fighting to the death and mounting suicide attacks to achieve 'martyrdom' See: Jim Michaels. 1,000 ISIS militants surrender as Iraq retakes key town of Hawija. USA Today. 5 October 2017. Accessed from https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/10/05/1-000-isis-militants-surrender-iraq-wins-islamic-state-loses-key-iraqi-town-1-000-militants-surrende/736901001/.

is the most active threat group outside Marawi.[12] JMA is attacking the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the largest armed group that is working with the Duterte government for a peace settlement. The JMA is determined to factionalise MILF, with assistance from IS-linked groups and fighters.

IS believes that attacks targeting MILF will fracture the group, leading pro-IS members to join IS centric groups, such as JMA. Esmael Abdulmaguid alias Abu Turaipe who leads JMA has managed to attract foreign fighters due to his network base. The latest encounter between MILF and JMA was at Barangay Tee, Datu Salibo, Maguindanao on 27 September.[13] As the battle in Marawi comes to an end, the clashes elsewhere in Mindanao are likely to increase in frequency, scale and magnitude.

JMA is a splinter group of a faction of Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and remains weak in terms of its numbers. As there are IS sympathisers within MILF, JMA could be successful in gaining a certain number of defectors. However, MILF's avid collaboration with the Armed Forces of the Philippines has kept the group intact, making it a strong fighting force against JMA.

Hapilon had earlier instructed his IS men to merge with pro-IS ASG fighters of Radulan Sahiron, plan and strategise an armed attack in different places in Mindanao. These fighters had intended to target Iligan, Cagayan and Cotabato City. In addition, ISP and ISL fighters planned to conduct terrorist activities in the municipalities of Lumbatan, Bayang, Tugaya and Madalum in Lanao del Sur, around Lake Lanao. Some of these planned attacks have been intercepted and disrupted by the authorities.

IS had plans to build its capabilities in southern Philippines, and spread its fighters and strength towards Indonesia. However, IS Philippines could not hold territory due to the lack of a strong fighting force and prolong the fight. Hence, as long as MILF led by Al-Hajj Murad Ebrahim is united, IS Philippines will not be able to achieve its expansionist goals.[14]

Regional Implications

The Southeast Asian countries, beyond Philippines, have demonstrated resolve and firmness in dealing with IS. The Ministers of Defence of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Brunei and Singapore are working towards developing a collaborative intelligence exchange platform where the agencies will work together to counter the current and emerging threat.[15] There is growing recognition that collaboration is integral to stem the rising tide of IS and prevent the occurrence of another 'Marawi' in the region.

Overall, the IS-centric threat situation outside Marawi shows no sign of abatement as several groups have joined IS in Mindanao. As the IS leadership outside Mindanao is intact, IS will prevail in Southern Philippines. However, its membership will remain limited, unless MILF factionalises further, with breakaway factions joining IS. IS presence in Mindanao is a threat to other countries in the Southeast Asian region. IS has created the East Asia Division with the intention of expanding from the Philippines to parts of Northeast and Southeast Asia. IS could attempt to spread its influence and conduct attacks in Sabah in Malaysia and Eastern Indonesia, posing a significant challenge to countries in the region.

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[12] Virgil Lopez. OSG: 20 ISIS cell groups operating in Mindanao. GMA News Online. June 19, 2017. Accessed from http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/615042/osg-20-isis-cell-groups-operating-in-mindanao/story/.

[13] Michael Quiñones. What Islamic State East Asia looks like post-Marawi. Rappler. 15 October 2017. Accessed from https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/185273-what-islamic-state-east-asia-looks-like-post-marawi.

[14] Inquier.net. MILF chief refuses to broker for Marawi attackers. July 20, 2017. accessed from http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/915164/milf-chief-refuses-to-broker-for-city-attackers#ixzz4vjrec2FW.

[15] Euan McKirdy, Kathy Quiano and Ivan Watson. Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines launch joint patrols to tackle ISIS threat. CNN News. June 19, 2017. http://edition.cnn.com/2017/06/19/asia/indonesia-malaysia-philippines-isis/index.html.

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Annex 1: 5

THE PHILIPPINES

1. Ansar Dawlah Fi Filibbin (ADFF) - May 14
2. Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement (RSIM) - Jul 14
3. Al Harakatul Islamiyah Battalion - Jul 14
4. Jama'at Ansar Khilafa - Aug 14
5. Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters - 13 Aug 14
6. Ansharul Khilafah Philippines Battalion - 14 Aug 14
7. Bangsamoro Justice Movement - 11 Sep 14
8. Khilafah Islamiya Mindanao (KIM) (Ghuraba) - Sep 14
9. Abu Sayyaf Group (Isnilon Hapilon Faction) - 2015
10. Syuful Khilafa Fi Luzon - 2015
11. Jama'atul Tawheed wal Jihad alias IS Lanao in Butig - Apr 15
12. Ma'rakah Al-Ansar Battalion - May 15
13. Dawla Islamiyyah Cotabato (Di Cotabato) - Jan 16
14. Dawlat Al Islamiya Waliyatul Masrik - Jan 16
15. Ansar Al-Shariah Battalion - 4 Jan 16
16. Jamaah al-Tawhid wal Jihad Philippines - Feb 16
17. Jundul-Tawhid Battalion (ASG Sulu) - Mar 16
18. Abu Dujanah Battalion - Jun 16
19. Abu Khubayn Battalion - Jun 16
20. Jundallah Battalion - Jun 16
21. Abu Sadr Battalion - Jun 16
22. Jamaah Al Muhajirin wal Anshor (Philipina) - 5 Apr 17
23. Islamic State of Marawi - May 17

LEGEND
🔴 Declared Bay'ah to Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi
🟢 Individuals in this group declared support to IS
🔵 Declared support to IS

The Significance of Megat Shahdan as a Singaporean IS Foreign Fighter

Jasminder Singh and Muhammad Haziq Bin Jani

Synopsis

The appearance last month of a Singaporean national, Megat Shahdan Abdul Samad, in a propaganda video of the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group before the fall of its de facto 'capital' Raqqa on October 17, reveals its desperation to stay relevant as it retreats into the so-called 'virtual caliphate.' This is the first time a Singaporean has been featured in an IS propaganda video. The video highlights the continuing threat of terrorism in the region, and underscores the need to continue enhancing counter-terrorism and counter-extremism measures to tackle with the fluid threat environment.

Introduction

In late September 2017, IS's propaganda mouthpiece, Al Hayat Media Centre, released a video *(Inside Khilafah 4[1])* featuring Megat Shahdan Abdul Samad alias 'Abu Uqayl.'[2] Dressed in military fatigues, Shahdan urged pro-IS supporters in the region to join the jihadist group to fight its enemies. The undated video, probably recorded in Syria, contains three messages for IS jihadists and supporters. First, it encouraged the jihadists to show perseverance in their struggle notwithstanding recent losses to the so-called Caliphate in Iraq and Syria. Second, the video urged the aspiring jihadists to perform the so-called hijrah (migration) to IS-held or controlled territories. Third, it appealed its supporters to join the mujahidin in the Philippines, particularly, or move to

Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan or West Africa.[3] These messages now have added significance in the light of the fall of Raqqa, the remaining fighters scattered in small groups in Iraq and Syria, and possible dispersal of the foreign fighters.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Shahdan, 39, left Singapore in 2014 to work in the Middle East, where he was believed to have been radicalised.[4] The security agencies have been aware of his presence in Syria and have been monitoring his activities regularly.[5] Furthermore, the Ministry revealed that Shahdan was a school-drop out with a criminal background. He was a secret society member with "a string of drug and criminal convictions."[6] Between 1997 and 2009, he was frequently jailed and put on various drug supervision regimes.[7]

The Significance of Shahdan's Video

Of the contemporary jihadist groups, IS has been most successful in exploiting social-media platforms in a strategic manner. By definition, terrorism is propaganda by the deed and by extension, the social-media operations of 'jihadi' groups constitute propaganda by communication and ideas. Given the complexity of terrorism's incentive structure, the terrorists can make a virtue out of any given situation. For instance, if the jihadists are killed, in their distorted view, it constitutes martyrdom that gets them their ultimate destination, the paradise. If they

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[1] Al Hayat Media Centre. *Inside Khilafah 4*, September 2017.
[2] Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore. "MHA Statement on ISIS Video Featuring Alleged Singaporean Fighter Abu Uqayl". *Press Releases*, September 24, 2017. Accessed on September 30, 2017, https://www.mha.gov.sg/NewsRoom/press-releases/Pages/MHA-Statement-on-ISIS-Video-Featuring-Alleged-Singaporean-Fighter-Abu-Uqayl.aspx

[3] *Inside Khilafah 4*
[4] Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore, *Press Releases*, September 24, 2017
[5] Ibid.
[6] Mokhtar, Faris. "Singaporean in IS video a school dropout, former secret society member". *TODAY online*, September 26, 2017. accessed on September 30, 2017, http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/sporean-video-was-school-dropout-and-secret-society-member-criminal-convictions
[7] Ibid.

survive, they would continue to defend and expand the "Khilafah." Even if they are losing territory, as is the case now, they consider it as a test from God requiring them to show steadfastness. It is in this context that in the near future, IS's social media propaganda is likely to get more strident and challenging.

For IS, these propaganda videos serve multiple purposes. First, they seek to inform IS sympathisers that the 'Caliphate' is alive and well, and on the path of victory notwithstanding territorial losses and military setbacks over the last one year. Second, these videos form part of IS recruitment campaign to replenish its depleting ranks and boost the morale of those fighting for the terror group. Lastly, the videos propagate IS's extremist narrative (ideological warfare) and information on bomb-making and other forms of terrorist attacks.

From this perspective, arguably, Shahdan's video is simultaneously delivering local (Singapore), regional (Southeast Asia) and global messages, since the video is spoken and sub-titled in English. Earlier IS's Southeast Asian videos have been primarily in Malay or Bahasa Indonesia. Hitherto, Singaporeans had not been featured in any significant way in IS propaganda videos or game plans. A Malay-Muslim Singaporean is now being showcased to demonstrate that some Singaporeans are still attracted to IS's ideology and finding their way to Syria and Iraq, particularly from the Middle East. Furthermore, IS is also proclaiming that it has a global footprint and that its ideology and militancy are being exported worldwide. It reaffirms a 'jihadi' organisational structure that is not headquartered in Iraq or Syria but decentralised in various parts of the world from West Africa to East Asia.

Moreover, with the loss of its Iraqi stronghold in Mosul, and with its own 'capital' Raqqa under siege, IS is signalling start of the era of 'virtual of caliphate,' where the centrality of territory would be de-emphasised while the ideological warfare and decentralised jihadist operations (lone-wolf attacks) will be prioritised globally. This 'model' of 'jihad' is not dissimilar to Al-Qaeda's franchising strategy in the post-9/11 era. Al-Qaeda, from a vertical-hierarchical organisation, de-centralised its organisational structure by granting autonomy to its affiliates in Yemen, Sahel and the Islamic Maghreb. Likewise, IS is relegating power and autonomy to its different Wilayats and the lone-wolf actors to continue the so-called jihad in other territories.

In this paradigm, fighters in any region can go to any IS-supported Wilayat in Yemen, Afghanistan, Libya, Africa or Afghanistan. Given this approach, authorities in Southeast Asia will have to pay closer attention to the conflict in Mindanao and the growing humanitarian crisis affecting the Rohingyas in Myanmar. It should not come as a surprise if Myanmar is targeted by IS for exploitation as IS has already mentioned the Rohingya issue in its publications. There are also pro-IS units operating in Bangladesh in competition with Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent for influence in Myanmar.

Conclusion

Shahdan's call for 'jihad' and his video are constant reminders of the need for continued high-level vigilance against extremist teachings and terrorist propaganda in the real world as well as in the murky cyber world. The region should brace itself for the 'virtualisation' of IS (from a territorial-based entity), and greater jihadisation of online space, especially now that it has lost Raqqa. Counter-radicalisation or counter-violent extremism efforts must continue relentlessly, even as kinetic measures are stepped up to neutralise terrorists. Special attention should be paid to developments in Mindanao and the Rakhine state to prevent any escalation that could be exploited by 'jihadists'.

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Extremism beyond Nusa Kambangan Prisons

Muh Taufiqurrohman, Muhammad Ali Usman and Ardi Putra Prasetya

Synopsis

The article describes the reasons behind continuous radicalisation within Indonesia's Nusa Kambangan prisons. It points out that lax security measures, understaffed prison facilities, low budgets and overworked prison guards have been some of the major factors behind the disturbing trend. As a conclusion, it proposes separate prison facilities for terrorist inmates or solitary confinements, employing full-time religious counselors, recruiting more qualified prison guards and more Detachment 88 officers, and increasing the budget allocation for prisons to overcome the problem.

Introduction

In Indonesia, imprisonment has not stopped terrorist inmates associated with the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group from recruiting new members, directing terrorist activities and building militant networks outside the prison. To prevent these activities, the Indonesian government through the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT), the Directorate General of Correction (Dirjen LAPAS) and police anti-terror unit, Detachment 88 (Indonesia's premier counter-terrorism agency), have taken various counter measures but these can be improved upon to achieve better results.

This article explores the factors that account for terrorist inmates' ability to carry out various illegal activities within their prisons, and offers some recommendations to overcome this.   The main findings in this article are based on empirical observations of the prisons on Nusa Kambangan Island in Central Java where high-risk terrorists are detained. It argues that the lack of qualified prison staff, lack of funds and poor prison mismanagement have allowed terrorist inmates to continue their subversive activities from the prisons.

Pro-IS Inmates

As of July 2017, there are forty-five terrorist inmates incarcerated in Nusa Kambangan prisons. Fourteen of them are placed in Pasir Putih Prison, the maximum-security prison on the island. The other fifteen are housed in Batu prison, and the rest are spread in Besi Prison (six inmates), Kembang Kuning Prison (six inmates) and Permisan Prison (four inmates). Of these forty-five inmates, at least thirty-nine are pro-IS inmates.[1] Among the pro-IS inmates, the high-profile militants include Aman Abdurrahman and Iwan Darmawan alias Rois who have directed pro-IS network and terrorist activities from their prison cells. Meanwhile, Abdullah Sonata and Achmad Widodo alias Abu Hanifah have continued recruitment of new members inside their prisons.

During Aman Abdurrahman and Rois' detention in Kembang Kuning Prison in 2015, they directed the establishment of the militant group Jamaah Ansharul Khilafah Islamiyah (JAKI), which police and media now call Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD). Aman also directed Saiful Muhtorir alias Abu Ghar to establish a pro-IS group in the Moluccas.[2] Rois not only funded JAKI's national meeting in Malang (East Java) on 21-24 November 2015, he also funded its military trainings in Malang and Cipanas (West Java) in December 2015.[3] In addition to that, he coordinated his men, Abu Ghar and Abu Asbal, to obtain weapons from Bandung gunsmiths for the January 2016 Jakarta

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[1] Field observation, Nusa Kambangan Island Prisons, May 16, 2017.
[2] The East Jakarta District Court. Indictment of Saiful Muhtorir. Case Dossier Number PDM-099/JKTM/06/2016.
[3] *Ibid.*

attack. (It turned out that the gunsmiths did not manufacture the weapons they wanted.) He also directed Suryadi Masud to smuggle weapons from the Philippines into Indonesia, and masterminded and funded the January 2016 Jakarta attack.[4]

On 9 February 2016, the Dirjen LAPAS transferred Aman and Rois to Pasir Putih Prison and placed them in solitary cells, after Detachment 88 discovered their involvement in the attack.[5] However, both continued to direct their network outside the prison in two ways. The first is through couriers and subordinates, namely Musolah and Dzulkifli Lubis. Musolah is a terrorist inmate involved in the 2011 Cirebon bombing, and Lubis is a terrorist inmate who sold weapons to Musolah.

Through Musolah and Lubis, both Aman and Rois advise their followers outside the prison, and receive messages from their followers. Aman and Rois write their messages on pieces of paper and send them to Musolah and Lubis by couriers. One of these couriers is a trusted senior non-terrorist inmate. After receiving the messages, Musolah and Lubis contact Aman's and Rois' families and followers outside the prison through phone calls or Telegram to deliver the messages.

Their families and followers then respond to their messages using the same methods. Musolah and Lubis then write down their messages on papers that they use to package Aman's and Rois' foods. The messages will reach Aman and Rois through the couriers during food delivery.

The second method is through Aman's and Rois' families who receive messages from both men when they visit them. Both inmates write their messages on papers and hide these papers in their folded shirt sleeves. When they meet their visiting families, they secretly give these papers to them; the families in turn smuggle them out of the

prison and convey these messages to Aman's and Rois' followers.

In contrast to Aman and Rois' approach, Abdullah Sonata and Abu Hanifah have focused on recruiting new members in the prison. Usually, their targets are ordinary inmates with criminal backgrounds in search of redemption to atone for their past crimes. Two cases in point are Herman and Muhammad Tata. Herman was recruited when he was imprisoned in Batu Prison for a drug-related offence. Both Herman and Tata were recruited in 2015. Tata was approached by Abdullah Sonata and was given advice for redeeming his sinful past. This approach was made when they met in common areas of Batu Prison such as visitor rooms and mosque.

Restricting Abdullah Sonata's recruitment activities, on 1 March 2017, Dirjen LAPAS transferred Abdullah Sonata from Batu Prison to Pasir Putih Prison based on the recommendation from Detachment 88 and Batu Prison warden. On the same day, another terrorist inmate, Muhammad Ichwan alias Abu Umar, was also transferred to Pasir Putih Prison for his suspected recruitment activities in Batu Prison. Just three months after his transfer, Abdullah Sonata managed to recruit Muhammad Tata to be his student and subordinate. One of Tata's jobs is to record sermons given by Aman Abdurrahman and help distribute the recording to pro-IS extremists outside the prison through Telegram groups.[6]

Terrorist activities inside the prisons went on unabated due to several deficiencies. For instance, police do not have permanent staff posted in the Batu Prison. They rely on information provided by prison guards and signals intelligent gathering. Unfortunately, the prison guards do not always report the terrorist activities going on in the Batu prison because they are busy monitoring non-terrorist inmates. Additionally, the prison staff also feared for their lives.

Anti-IS Inmates

Three anti-IS inmates have been countering pro-IS inmates' propaganda on Nusa Kambangan Island. They are Edi Setiono

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[4] IPAC, "Marawi, The "East Asia Wilayah" And Indonesia", July 21 ,2017, No. 38, p. 16
[5] Tim Redaksi. 25 Napi Teroris Dikumpulkan Satu Lapas di Nusa Kambangan. *Viva News*. February 19, 2016, accessed at http://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/737800-25-napi-teroris-dikumpulkan-satu-lapas-di-nusa-kambangan on July 30, 2017.

[6] Authors interview with prison guard in Pasir Putih prison in March 2017.

alias Abbas in Batu Prison, Pepi Fernando in Besi Prison and Subur Sugiyarto in Kembang Kuning Prison. Previously, two other inmates Hendi Suhartono and Marwan Kurniawan alias Wak Geng were also involved in countering IS propaganda, particularly in Pasir Putih Prison; since their transfers to BNPT's prison in Bogor (West Java) in February 2017, there are no anti-IS inmates countering such propaganda in Pasir Putih Prison. All these inmates refuted IS' narratives by demonising IS' leaders for killing Al Qaeda-affiliated leaders and portraying IS supporters as narrow-minded followers. They have angered pro-IS inmates to the extent that the latter have threatened to kill Pepi Fernando. Pepi is currently imprisoned in Besi Prison for his involvement in the 2011 Book Bomb.

Factors behind IS Radicalisation

There are multiple factors that account for radicalisation in Nusa Kambangan prisons such as the lack of trained prison staff, insufficient operational funds and misplacement of terrorist inmates. Furthermore, the prisons on the island are understaffed and overworked, with only one prison guard watching over sixty inmates comprising both terrorists and criminals. Consequently, the prison authorities are unable to monitor the activities of every terrorist inmate efficiently. Additionally, the majority of prison staffers do not have adequate knowledge of extremism and terrorism. As such, they have no knowledge of how to counter IS propaganda in their prisons. Fear of losing their lives adds to their problems. They are bullied and threatened on a daily basis by IS inmates who call them apostates and worthy to be killed.

The number of Detachment 88 officers working in the prisons is also small. There are only two officers responsible for managing visits of terrorist inmates, recruiting informants from among the inmates and de-radicalising them. Yet, they are required to help other officers to conduct surveillance on terrorists operating around the island. For these reasons, they do not have enough time to watch the inmates in each prison daily.

Shortage of funds also hinders Detachment 88 officers from recruiting more informants, and limits them from rewarding inmates who

are cooperative. This discourages the inmates from giving intelligence tip offs to the officers or participating in the officers' de-radicalisation programme. Each month the officers only receive around US$300. In contrast, they need at least US$2,400 per month to recruit informants and de-radicalise forty terrorist inmates as per inmate costs US$60.

Keeping terrorist and criminal inmates in the same prison cells and lax security measures facilitate radicalisation, and hampers de-radicalisation of 'low-ranking' terrorist inmates (the 'foot-soldiers'). Non-terrorist inmates, even in the high security Pasir Putih Prison, are able to mingle with terrorist inmates. Recruiters such as Abdullah Sonata and Abu Hanifah seized this opportunity to recruit non-terrorist inmates. They hold at least weekly religious study groups in which they spread their extremist views to non-terrorist inmates.[7]

'High-ranking' terrorist inmates (they include the ideologues and 'commanders') stay in the same block as 'low-ranking' terrorist inmates. This creates a psychological barrier, which makes the inmates reluctant to cooperate with prison staff or Detachment 88 officers. The 'high-ranking' inmates do not cooperate with prison staff and Detachment officers because they do not want to be seen as weak by 'low-ranking' inmates. On the other hand, the latter do not want to cooperate with the staff and officers because they fear punishment from their senior inmates.

Looking Ahead

The less than satisfactory situation in Nusa Kambangan prison complex requires urgent attention; several actions can be taken to redress the situation. First, the Indonesian government should build a separate prison facility for terrorist inmates. All hardcore terrorist inmates should be placed in solitary confinement, and only allowed to interact with their visiting families, de-radicalisation officers and prison guards. After they have been de-radicalised, they should be moved to shared cells ahead of their release. BNPT has a prison in Sentul, Bogor that suits this purpose. The Dirjen LAPAS and BNPT need to build such a prison on Nusa Kambangan

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[7] Personal coversation with prison guard on Nusa Kambangan island in March 2017.

Island or outside Java. Papua is a good location for the prison. Its long distance from Jakarta will limit the inmates' access to their followers. Dirjen LAPAS however is planning to place all terrorist inmates in Nusa Kambangan Pasir Putih Prison.

Secondly, the government should employ qualified religious counsellors in each prison permanently. Working with former jihadists, these counsellors will discuss religious topics with the inmates to counter extremist teachings at least on a weekly basis. The discussions should be on a one-on-one basis, and not held in a big group to avoid peer pressure and grandstanding among the inmates.

Finally, Dirjen LAPAS need to recruit more prison guards to work in Nusa Kambangan prisons. These guards should be trained in counter-terrorism and counter-extremism so that they know how to handle terrorist inmates. Police also need to place more Detachment 88 officers, both for improving their intelligence gathering and de-radicalisation efforts. More funds should also be earmarked to enable these officers to recruit more informants and step up their de-radicalisation efforts.

Conclusion

The majority of the terrorist inmates in Nusa Kambangan prison support IS. Their incarceration does not stop them from conducting terrorist-related activities. It is imperative for the Indonesian government to solve the problem of prison radicalisation by placing terrorist inmates in a special prison or solitary confinements, employing full-time religious counsellors, recruiting more qualified prison guards and more Detachment 88 officers, and increasing the prison's operational budget.

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Radicalisation: Examining a Concept, its Use and Abuse

Paul Hedges

Synopsis

This article explores some recent literature on radicalisation and its policy implications. In particular, it questions the common use and understanding of radicalisation, and focuses on the diverging arguments of two French scholars, Giles Kepel and Olivier Roy about pathways to radicalisation. The article also examines the link between radicalisation and "Militant Neo-Islamist Jihadism", and makes recommendations on dealing with the phenomenon discussed.

Introduction

As a concept, a lot can be said about radicalisation. Focusing on an academic debate about pathways to radicalisation between two French scholars, Giles Kepel and Olivier Roy, this article offers an overview of some key literature on radicalisation from 2015 to the present. It also outlines their respective positions and arguments, and offers some additional academic insights to take the debate further.[1]

The article also explores and clarifies key issues associated with the concept of radicalisation. First, does the term "radicalisation" refer to anything meaningful at all? This paper contends that overall the term works as a tool to obfuscate rather than to clarify.[2] But since the term is widely used in academic literature, this paper employs it as shorthand for multifaceted ways in which worldviews of particular individuals, groups, and communities may become extreme, militant, or violent.

Second, there is neither a commonly-accepted personality profile nor a linear pathway to radicalisation. In other words, the landscape and trajectory of terrorism in terms of recruitment and evolution are both evolving and fluid. A third issue is the distinctiveness associated with terms such as Islamist or 'Jihadist' terrorism and what we may or may not signify by this, particularly in the present context because they relate to wider Islamic and Salafi thought.

These issues are significant for policy-related work and analysis because if radicalisation is misunderstood (or as commonly understood), it can lead to misapprehensions of how to approach and deal with the issue. As such, there is a clear practitioner and policy dynamic that runs through this article and will be especially developed in the conclusion.

What is (Wrong with) Radicalisation?

Arguably, the first step to examine and understand radicalisation is to understand that radicalisation is not something in itself. People do adopt worldviews, ideologies, and practices which can be considered radical, and some of them go on to commit acts of terror.[3] However, I would argue that there is no distinct practice and special realm of thought that can be labelled as radicalisation.

In sociological terms, it is all about socialisation.[4] Individuals behave and exist in the world by the normal socialisation processes. That is to say, people learn from their friends, contacts, people they respect, family, or whoever it may be, about what it

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[1] Gilles Kepel, *Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017); Olivier Roy, *Jihad and Death: The Global Appeal of Islamic State*, trans. by Cynthia Schoch, (London: Hurst and Company, 2017).

2 Per se, radicalisation is a neutral term which can be positive and negative. Instead of using the concept loosely, it is essential to point out that negative radicalisation is problematic.

[3] Here terrorism means the politically and ideologically motivated indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians.

[4] Matthew Francis, "Understanding Radicalisation: Expert Interview with Dr Matthew Francis", 18 November 2014. http://www.onreligion.co.uk/understanding-radicalisation-expert-interview-with-dr-matthew-francis/

means to be a human being. In other words, how to live, interact with others, what code of life and forms of practice they should adopt. As such we do not see some distinct process called 'radicalisation', but socialisation into worldviews and behaviours that we label as 'radical'. However, as discussed below, it is not a straight pathway from such socialisation into being 'radicalised'.

Instead of acting outside their worldview through indoctrination and brainwashing, radicalisation is about active involvement in a new worldview.[5] Now, some people referred to as radicalised have become socialised into worldviews or ideologies which are considered radical. However, many people who are not regarded as being radicalised may hold views which are regarded as radical and may well see violence as a way to get to their ends. Criminal gangs, for instance, will employ violence. However, when the term radicalisation is used today it typically refers to pathways into terrorism.

Another issue with the term is what it implies: does it refer solely to people who turn violent or use terrorist acts, or a wider base of sympathisers with identical worldview, or with specific groups, such as Al-Qaeda or the so-called 'Islamic State' (IS)? Are all of these people radicals or radicalised?[6] Without more careful delineation about what these terms mean and how they should be deployed, their loose usage will turn into witch-hunting, chasing some mythic and imagined process or worldview. This point will be explored further below.

A second key misconception is the idea that there is only one, or primarily one, major factor in pathways towards radicalisation or more appropriately, violent extremism or terrorism.[7] Notably, whether it is the far-right,

far-left, 'jihadist' or other forms, some similarities are identifiable which will be discussed below. Yet, despite a move from the now largely discredited psychological profiling, to looking at pathways into terrorism, one single pathway does not simply exist.[8]

Roy has summed up some common factors in relation to 'jihadist' radicalism, but they are far from definitive nor are they useful profiling factors. Taking Roy's list and some key findings from other surveys, we can identify "typical" elements often noted in terrorism studies.[9] For instance, in France, many are from second-generation immigrant families. The families are often dysfunctional in some way (if compared to what is often represented as the normative nuclear family), that is to say there is abuse, divorce, or single-parent situations. An involvement in petty crime, violence, and gangs is commonplace. Many also come from somewhat disadvantaged groups or marginal social contexts, often being under-employed.

There is also a sense of disenfranchisement from society, where although integrated in many ways, one does not quite fit in. Coupled with this is a sense of grievance at injustices, often by one's own government or the West more broadly, concerning the treatment of Muslims. Such individuals are often converts or those who have not taken their religion seriously but have some form of being "born again."

The problem with the above-mentioned analysis is twofold. On the one hand, statistically speaking, these traits are found typically in perhaps half of samples or surveys. Sometimes it can be even more, around sixty or seventy percent, but this can vary from sample to sample.[10] As such, they

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[5] Marc Sageman, *Misunderstanding Terrorism* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press,2017).

[6] Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins, "The Radicalisation Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 38, 11(2015): 958-75.

[7] An example of a simplistic model would be Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," *American Psychologist* 60, 2 (2005): 161-9, but also as we will see both Kepel and Roy suggest a single monolithic path to explain radicalisation in all examples.

[8] Gabriele Marranci, *Wars of Terror*, (London and New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic), 2015.

[9] Roy, *Jihad and Death*. Other sources include overviews such as: Khosrokhavar Farhad, "Prisons and Radicalisation in France," *Open Democracy*, ISA RC-47: Open Movements, 19 March, 2015 and United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, *Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria*, July 2017.

[10] United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, *Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria*, July 2017. http://www.un.org/en/counterterrorism/assets/img/Report_Final_20170727.pdf

are the most common traits, but far from definitive or defining of all forms of radicalisation. For instance, a good proportion come from well off and economically privileged situations.[11] Also, as noted, much of this literature is based in the West and so may not reflect a global dynamic.

On the other hand, the issues raised do not provide a clear and well defined group that can be pinpointed. Being economically disadvantaged, second generation immigrants (even of specific groups, for instance South Asians in the UK or from the Maghreb in France) with a petty criminal or gang background will sweep up vast numbers of people. Again, statistically very few of these will go on to join terror groups or engage in acts of terrorism. Meanwhile, there is good evidence that using surveillance over vast groups or castigating them as potential terrorists is almost certainly counterproductive.[12]

Kepel vs Roy: Ideology or the Radical Milieu

Recently, a distinct academic debate on the conceptualisation of radicalisation has emerged between the approach of Giles Kepel and Olivier Roy.

Adopting a historical-analytical approach, Kepel traces the development of the Salafist thought that has come to define itself in contradistinction to the West.[13] Particularly focusing on a work by Al-Suri in 2005, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, Kepel argues for a new (third) wave of 'jihadism' that focuses on small scale attacks in the West.[14] For him, the purist Salafist doctrine,

especially as exemplified in the concept of *al wala' wal bara'a* (loyalty and disavowal) whereby Muslims should not befriend non-Muslims and should be essentially hostile to them, leads inexorably to the confrontation of Islam and the West.[15] When coupled with the discontent of the French *banlieues* (economically poor and marginalised suburbs), Kepel sees a perfect storm brewing as Muslim youths ghettoised in these regions react to a history of oppression and inability to inculturate. In short, Kepel's argument is that Salafi ideology, economic disparity and social prejudices are the root causes of today's situation of 'jihad' and terror in the West.

By way of contrast, Roy under the catchphrase "the Islamicisation of radicalism"[16] suggests that the specific Salafi thought has not led to present situation. He argues that many modern 'jihadist' terrorists are not in tune with Salafism. For Roy, the present trajectory of youth discontent in the West can be traced to roots in anarchist terror in the nineteenth century, which is exemplified in a youth culture of nihilism and aggression. He sees this trend in incidents such as the Columbine school shooting in the US in 1999 in which 13 people died.[17]

Certainly, he does not let Islam off the hook, and he is very clear that there is a particular form of Islamist 'jihadism' which underpins the culture that supports this violence and radicalisation. However, he does not see the link from religion to radicalisation per se, nor especially from poverty and deprivation, though as he says these alongside prejudice and intolerance play a role in supporting the perception that allows the worldview to flourish.

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[11] Alan B. Krueger, *What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism* (Princeton, NY and Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[12] Peter R. Neumann, *Radicalised: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2016); Gabriele Marranci, *Wars of Terror*.

[13] Kepel with Jardin, *Terror in France*.

[14] Ibid., 23. Notably different scholars theorise the so-called waves of terrorism differently. For Kepel, the three waves he discusses focus on 'jihadism' rather than terrorism per se. The three waves of 'jihadism' are: first, the Afghan conflict where it was focused in Muslim-majority states; second, the rise of Al-Qaeda with large scale attacks on the West; and, third, the notion of small scale attacks in the West, often associated especially with ISIS.

[15] See Mohamed Bin Ali, *The Roots of Religious Extremism: Understanding the Salafi Doctrine of Al-Wala' wal Bara'* (London: Imperial College Press, 2015).

[16] Roy, *Jihad and Death*.

[17] The shooting took place on 20 April 1999 in Columbine High School, Littleton, Colorado, USA. Carried out by two teenagers and students armed with automatic weapons they killed thirteen people and wounded many others. For a discussion of the causes and event see Gumbel Andrew, "The Truth about Columbine", *The Guardian,* 17 April 2009 available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/apr/17/columbine-massacre-gun-crime-us.

In short , the dispute between Kepel and Roy is whether contemporary radicalisation is based in, respectively, on the one hand, an Islamic ideology and perceived persecution and relative deprivation, or on the other, a nihilism and death cult that just happens to find its current manifestation in a particular Islamic worldview. For the purpose of this paper, and with a view to draw the practical lessons from this, the paper will now focus on the two disputes.

Islam, Salafism, Jihadism

All terrorists are Salafis, but not all Salafis are terrorists, is a well-worn mantra in the literature. Indeed, we often see Salafis termed as quietist, activist, or 'jihadist', though this is over simplistic.[18] For one thing, the lines between them are not always hard and fast and can be porous. Moreover, Peter Neumann argues that the contemporary Salafis are not like their nineteenth century ancestors. Today, in the West at least, Salafis are likely to be as much influenced by Western culture and American style as images of seventh century Arabia. The modern 'Jihadi' scene he argues is influenced by IS's online productions and previously by Al-Qaeda's Yemeni leader Anwar al-Awlaki's magazine *Inspire*, aware of modern production styles and keen to speak to young people in the street. It is about hip-hop and "Jihadi cool" as much as traditional Islamic culture.[19]

The academic study of religious traditions is useful in understanding the dispute between Kepel and Roy in a different way, because tradition is always a changing phenomenon.[20] Roy's argument that many young 'jihadis' are not Salafis because they do not lean on strict rules about prayer, piety, and personal decorum seems correct. As he notes, drinking, non-attendance at Friday prayers, and so on is noted in the biographies of various recent terrorists in France, Belgium, and across other parts of the Western world.

However, Neumann seems to suggest that it is not that these people may not be Salafis, but rather that the definition and notion of Salafi are changing.[21] Kepel is correct that the codes of purity, reform, and disavowal of non-Muslims are all features of the thought world of contemporary 'jihadism' that developed within the Salafist worldview. While Roy is correct that the modern 'jihadis' do not cite the Salafi sources and figures like al-Suri that Kepel sees as significant in developing the contemporary context, they provide what can be called the cultural milieu of contemporary 'jihadism'.

Indeed, as Nafees Hamid has noted recently the pool of radicalisation is changing. While al-Qaeda would take people to training camps for months or years to ensure ideological purity for recruits, this is much less of a concern for IS.[22] Indeed, today it may well be true that terrorists simply do not come from the Salafist groups if by this we mean the more traditionalist brand, rather recruits are sought from the street and potentially more impressionable younger people. This means that things are changing. As Marc Sageman noted, if we look back across samples over decades, the vast majority of terrorists have no criminal background.[23] However, today, a majority of at least one sample of recent foreign fighters did have either petty or violent criminal backgrounds.[24] Indeed, jail has been noted as a key breeding ground for radicalism where disenfranchised youths may convert and be drawn into the influence of jihadist thinkers.[25]

Considering the above, the contemporary militant landscape can be defined as one of what I will term Militant Neo-Islamist Jihadism. It has evolved from Salafism, but it radically differs from traditional forms of that tradition. Certainly, most Western Muslim converts who make up a significant

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[18] Neumann, *Radicalised*.
[19] Erick Stakelbeck, *ISIS Exposed: Beheadings, Slavery, and the Hellish Reality of Radical Islam* (Washington, D.C.: Regency Publishing, 2015).
[20] James R. Lewis and Olav Hammer, *The Invention of Sacred Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[21] Neumann, *Radicalised*.
[22] Nafees Hamid, "What Makes a Terrorist?," *New York Review of Books,* August 23, 2017. www.nybooks.cpm/daily/2017/08/23/what-makes-a-terrorist/.
[23] Sageman, *Misunderstanding Terrorism*.
[24] United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, *Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria*, July 2017.
[25] Farhad Khosrokhavar, "Prisons and Radicalisation in France," *Open Democracy*, ISA RC-47: Open Movements, March 19, 2015.

proportion are simply too ignorant of the religion to know what is or is not Salafism, and indeed again statistics show that non-converts generally come from a not particularly devout background.

Certainly, one recent sample of returned foreign fighters from Syria indicates many did not even know how to pray, let alone anything about doctrinal or creedal intricacies.[26] Many figures are what have been termed "born again" Muslims, often with a strongly Westernised religiosity, by which is meant that it is shorn of cultural form, though as noted, this is strongly influenced by Western cultural forms at least in presentation. As such, Kepel is correct to trace this Salafist heritage, even if he does not note the very different trajectory of some of the most recent trends.

As Neumann has argued, and is inherent in Roy's arguments, there is specific militant 'jihadist' culture that is fed through Western concepts. In this 'jihadist' culture, much of the theatrical violence of groups like IS relies on video games, horror movies, and graphic content that are intended to spread fear, and can be seen as linked to images of the cool jihadi look – black gear, Kalashnikov touting, etc. How far the eventual demise of IS as a military power with its own territory will affect this remains to be seen.

The term Neo-Islamist has been used because, while drawing from jihadist salafi thought, it seems well accepted in the academic literature that the jihadist worldview is entirely divorced from mainstream Islam (though the popular literature still remains all too often stuck in the notion that much terrorism is inspired by reading the Qur'an), and the quite strict regulations on, for instance, what military jihad means, how it can be conducted, etc. Not to mention the way that respect and toleration for the religious other is built into tradition from the Sunna (tradition) of the Prophet, exemplified in documents like the so-called Medina Charter.[27] We may therefore use the term

Militant Neo-Islamist Jihadism or jihadism for short.

Radicals and Contemporary Radicalisation

In a survey in 1968, Hoffman observed that no known active terrorist group had a religious base, but by 1993, twenty percent of terror groups had such a base.[28] This phenomenon has been termed the religious wave in terrorism. The tactics and ideology of contemporary jihadism are linked back to the earliest days of terrorism, building from Carlo Piscane's (1818-57) notion of the "propaganda of the deed", especially as developed by Pyotr Kropotkin (1842-1921) who made it a terrorist strategy, and such figures as Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) who saw violence as necessary in freeing the colonised from psychological trauma.

The founders of modern 'jihadism' have further developed these ideologies.[29] What is clear from this, and other studies, is that the makeup and ideology of terrorist groups always changes. Diego Gambetta and Steffan Hertog, for instance, have ably shown the vast overrepresentation of engineers in many early 'jihadist' groups.[30] This contrasted with some, such as the Red Army Faction, where humanities and social sciences graduates predominated. However, such profiles, despite the author's claims that these are probably (though they admit these remain speculative) linked to personality types, are not entirely useful.

Moreover, some of the most recent surveys of present-day 'jihadis' show many coming from poorly-educated and deprived backgrounds contrasting with the more educated early figures and modern leaders.[31] Indeed, this gives us no specific profile. The poorly-educated background is typical of some countries, such as France and Scandinavia, while the UK has produced

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[26] United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, *Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria*, July 2017.
[27] Miroslav Volf, Ghazi bin Muhammad, and Melissa Yarrington, *A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor* (Grand

Rapids, MI and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2010).
[28] Neumann, *Radicalised.*
[29] Ibid.
[30] Diego Gambetta and Steffen Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad: The Curious Connection between Violent Extremism and Education* (Princeton, NJ and Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2016).
[31] United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, *Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria*, July 2017.

many who are often university graduates. This survey of the problem of profiling takes us back to the issue noted in our second question that we do not simply find a single pathway into radicalism or terrorism.

While Kepel and Roy present two grand narratives which explain the contemporary understanding of radicalisation, however, neither provides an overall perspective. Even in the French context, there is no agreement between them. Combined with a changing landscape, part of the problem is the presence of complex interaction between push and pull factors in the contemporary context.

For instance, there seems good reason to believe that a significant number of Muslims who travelled to Syria and ended up fighting there went initially as part of aid parties to provide humanitarian assistance. However, in the midst of a war zone, they ended up fighting and so became embroiled in what are termed terrorist groups.[32] A survey by the United Nations (UN) looking at returnee foreign terrorist fighters suggests that ideology often played only a very small part of these people's decision to become 'jihadists'. However, it is important to point out that as disillusioned returnees these individuals have an interest in playing down such ideological commitments – which still leaves us with a sizeable number who claimed such a stance. Rather, the desire to help their fellow Muslims who were perceived as beleaguered, in need, and under attack was the most dominant motivator.[33] Arguably, at least, this is very different from what we may typically understand by the term radicalisation.

This last point raises the issue that pathways into radicalism are diverse and non-linear. Neumann has summed up what he describes as three types of radicals. First, defenders, those who primarily wish to defend their fellow Muslims. They may be devout but are not generally, what we would call "extremists." Second, seekers whose involvement is not mainly about politics or religion but are those seeking "identity, community, power, and a feeling of masculinity" buy into the 'jihadist' counterculture. This category also includes

hangers-on whose engagement is very much via Sageman's classic "bunch of guys" theory.[34] Third, those who may not be ideologically motivated but whose attachment is to their specific close-knit community of friends. Such an approach seems more useful than taking a single meta-narrative approach.

Countering Radicalism with a Focus on Militant Neo-Islamic Jihadism

There is good reason to believe that the threat of far-right extremism, violence, and radicalisation poses an equal if not greater risk to society than 'jihadism'. This is certainly in the West, if not globally. Nevertheless, since the particular focus of this paper is on radicalisation associated with what I have termed Militant Neo-Islamist Jihadism, four main areas on policy relevant thinking are highlighted below.[35]

First, the term "radicalisation" itself is not helpful as it suggests some specific and particular ways by which "normal" people become violent. As noted, people join terrorist groups or become involved in radicalisation pathways through a variety of means. Not many are ideologically motivated, and certainly, a primarily religious motivation is nearly always secondary at most.

Second, the youth 'jihadist' cultural milieu is now booming and clearly established as cool. The answer to countering such a cultural milieu goes beyond just developing a moderate Islam – the likes of Tariq Ramadan speak to a very different group of people from the primarily street-culture-influenced 18-29 year olds who seem to be the main pool of radicals at present. Having credible moderate role models and voices showing that 'jihadism' is not the only way to be Islamic, is still important and may have an

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[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

[34] Sageman, *Misunderstanding Terrorism*.
[35] Globally, and certainly in the West, there is good reason to believe that the threat of far-right extremism, violence, and radicalisation poses a greater risk to society than jihadism. However, this paper has focused on jihadism, which is not to downplay other problems or suggest this is more significant. Further, if scholars such as Roy and Neumann are right, jihadism does not stand alone but is part of a generational or cultural milieu of youth culture and so we would certainly expect to see many links between that and the rise of far-right extremism.

effect, but the message needs to be packaged with education to a youth audience in ways that speak to them.

Third, the changing 'jihadist' landscape, with no definitive profile or pathway towards radicalisation presents a policy challenge. Much time is wasted looking for the single answer, or master key to unlock the door to solve the problem. While studies show that problems such as poverty, unemployment, prejudice, or relative social deprivation alone do not lead to radicalism, they nevertheless are often the seedbeds in which it can grow.[36] Of course, the fact that jihadis can come from wealthy and educated backgrounds means resolving such problems alone will not be enough but it can certainly undercut certain pathways. In particular, what often emerges as a background is the sense of grievance that Muslims feel about the hypocrisy or unfairness of the West, or a belief that the "War on Terror" is a subterfuge for Westernising or destroying Islam.[37] Again, while not a panacea, more just and transparent foreign and domestic policy can counter narratives that give credence to 'jihadist' ideologies.

Fourth, something of the elephant in the room and not directly addressed so far has been the issue of trajectories into violence.[38] A radical milieu that does not result in violence remains perhaps a challenging, even troubling, counterculture, but not such a threat. It is clear that while many may embrace the 'jihadist' counterculture very few actually take the further step to violence. Clearly, this issue needs to be addressed and understood as 'jihadism' clearly countenances such a step. As noted above, quite a few studies suggest that indiscriminate finger pointing or surveillance of communities may be counterproductive. Any response to this therefore needs to be measured, targeted, evidence-based, and empathetic to the communities involved.

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[36] Krueger, *What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism*.
[37] Marranci, *Wars of Terror*.
[38] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003).

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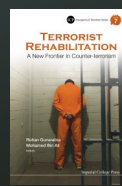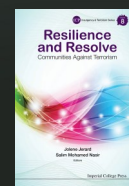
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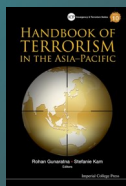
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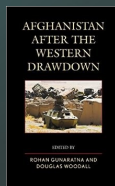
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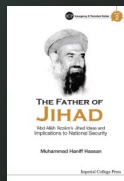(Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015)

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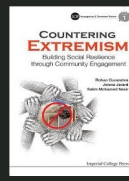Rohan Gunaratna and Mohamed Bin Ali
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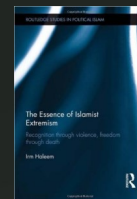(Imperial College Press, 2015)
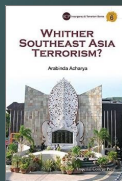
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