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Terrorism as an Instrument of Cultural Warfare: the meaning of Anders Breivik

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The 23 July 2011 attacks in Norway brought to light the threat coming from the new extreme right-wing movement in Europe. There is a need to understand the political and socio-cultural context from which Anders Breivik, the mastermind of the attacks, has emerged from and its implications for governments and security agencies.



(L) Map showing the location of Oslo and Utoya island, where attacks took place. (R) File photograph of Anders Behring Breivik, the mastermind of the attacks of 23 July 2011.
Image Credit: [NDJ World News](#)

The terrorist attacks of 23 July 2011 launched by a lone right-wing extremist in stereotypically quiet Norway struck government offices in the capital city, Oslo and a summer camp for children of the political elite on the idyllic island of Utoya. The resulting death toll of 77, mainly young people, on the island was the largest loss of

life in Norway since World War II and was the deadliest carnage ever inflicted by a single gunman. To say that the political establishments and law enforcement agencies in both Norway and the rest of Europe have been shaken by this seemingly sudden irruption of a virulent and murderous right-wing domestic terrorism is an under-

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statement. Particularly since everybody initially thought that the attacks bore the hallmarks of Al Qaeda. In Norway, there was good reason to be surprised by the killer's identity and motives: 32-year old Anders Behring Breivik is the product of an upper middle class upbringing and a one-time resident of the solidly middle class Oslo suburb of Skøyen. How could such a person commit such monstrous and evil acts was the question on everybody's mind, particularly in Norway. Breivik, who looks like any "normal" Norwegian, had never caught the attention of the security services. Breivik was well-integrated into society and was careful enough to ensure that his "abnormal" activities – preparations for the murderous rampage – remained below the radarscope of the feeble efforts of monitoring the extreme right-wing. Soon after his capture, his idiosyncrasies and delusions of grandeur caught the attention of law enforcement officials. During police questioning, he bizarrely demanded to be appointed the head of the Norwegian army and called for the abdication of King Harald V, but the confessed killer is unlikely to be declared insane.

Breivik's murderous rampage prompted the Norwegian government and the rest of Europe to begin a process of revamping their security protocols and to look more closely at the rise of the extreme right-wing within their societies. For the past several decades, Norway has been a quiet, prosperous and generous welfare state, blessed with excellent schooling, high wages, and considerable social uniformity. Norway did not have a large immigrant population and thus did not suffer hugely from problems associated with the integration and assimilation of newcomers as did other European nations such as Great Britain, France and Germany with considerably larger immigrant populations. Immigrants in Norway made up 9-10% of the total population of five million. There was little outward social tension between the native Norwegians and the immigrants and both groups had ample access to the largesse and services that were provided by a rich and generous state.

It has been many years since right-wing extremism has been a major concern in Norway. Norwegian

extreme right-wing groups are tiny and fragmented, owing largely to the government's anti-Nazi campaign, carried out in the wake of the 2001 murder by a neo-Nazi gang of Benjamin Hermansen, a young Norwegian boy whose father was from Ghana. The campaign included preventive attempts to hinder recruiting, as well as efforts to provide neo-Nazis with an "exit" strategy, enabling them to abandon the sometimes cult-like groups.

Extreme right-wing parties have had no electoral success. Even during its heyday under the Nazi occupation, the pro-German Nazi *Nasjonal Samling Party* of Vidkun Quisling – the only person executed in Norway in the twentieth-century and whose name has become a by-word for treason – gained no more than 2.5% of the votes. In the general election of 2009, the neo-Nazi party Vigrid won just 179 votes.

Norway's intelligence services have warned of a potential threat, but the population and the media were more focused on the possibility of Islamist violence. What far-right activity there was seems to have occurred online. The populist, right-wing *Progress Party* supports highly restrictive immigration policies, but is hardly comparable to the extreme-right parties in other countries. The PST -- the Norwegian Police Security Force, concluded in its most recent publicly available risk analysis, published in February 2011, that right-wing extremists posed "no serious threat." Still, the PST did note "a higher level of activity of some anti-Islamic groups," mostly on various social-media websites. However, none of them had issued any threats that they were going to engage in any acts of violence.

The Right Wing as the new threat?

Anders Breivik's horrific act of terrorism focused attention on the radical right in the rest of Europe where far-right populist parties have grown in strength in the last two decades. It would be very unfair to characterize the entire far-right in Europe as adherents of political violence. Similarly, it is wrong to characterize them all as direct descendants of the post-World War II remnants of the extreme fascist and Nazi right: anti-intellectual, deeply racist, and nihilist. The far-right in contemporary

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(L) View of Oslo several minutes after a bomb exploded and struck government offices. Image Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#) (R) A scene in Utoya island where Ander Breivik went on a shooting rampage. Image Credit: [NDJ World News](#)

Europe is not a monolithic entity. However, it is not anti-intellectual and not all of its adherents are mindless racists either. The far-right is anti-globalization, anti-multicultural, anti-immigrant, supportive of European cultural and Christian values, anti-rampant capitalism, and supportive of traditional values and mores. It focuses on culture, and more specifically on attacking multiculturalism, which has been defined as the extension of equitable status to distinct ethnic and religious groups without promoting any specific ethnic, religious, and/or cultural community values as central. Not surprisingly, multiculturalism which has enabled the widespread "infiltration" of Islamic values within Europe is the bug-bear of the radical right, even as mainstream European politicians now castigate it as a failed policy in Europe. The radical right promotes itself as a defender of European civilization and culture. It believes in *cultural differentialism*, the idea that cultures can co-exist but in separate and segregated domains. Somewhat slyly and cleverly, many have eschewed direct and crass racism, arguing that they are not racist but defenders of mono-culturalism and against multiculturalism. Some of the groups on the far-right adhere to a vicious form of anti-semitism; others, have jettisoned the old

shibboleths about the Jews and instead have adopted a form of philo-semitism which sees Israel as a bulwark of Judaea-Christian values against the looming threat of Islam.

In short, for some of these groups or populist right-wing politicians, the Muslim immigrants – with their "strange" religious values and mores – have replaced the Jews as the inassimilable "Other." Moreover, Muslim immigrants are the "source" of much of the violence plaguing Europe nowadays. Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) leader Heinz-Christian said during an early July interview with *Spiegel Online*: "*Not every Muslim is a terrorist*," he said. "*But every terrorist in the last decade was a Muslim. That is the fundamental problem.*" While this was an astonishingly inaccurate and bigoted statement to have made – acts of terror by separatists and left-wingers in Europe are *not* undertaken by Muslims – it was only after Breivik's actions did the media and intellectuals in Europe rouse themselves to challenge such statements.

After years of paying attention to Islamist, separatist, and left-wing/anarchist extremist groups, European governments and law enforcement agencies are now haunted by a "new" specter: that of a virulent fringe

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within the new far-right populist movement committed to the use of violence. Before the attacks in Norway, Europe's security forces had noted a growth in the scale and sophistication of extreme right-wing propaganda, but believed that the threat of a large scale terrorist attack was on the decline. The reasons given were as follows: "Lack of cohesion, a lower degree of overall coordination of right-wing terrorist and extremist groups, little public support and effective law enforcement operations...had gone a long way towards accounting for the diminished impact of right-wing terrorism," so wrote the European Union's *Europol*, police organization in its 2010 report. In hopes of preventing similar events, both European Union interior ministers and the European law enforcement agency *Europol* pledged to review the dangers posed by far-right extremists within the 27 member states. The topic of radicalization has been tacked on to the agenda for the late September meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, to which non-EU member Norway has now also been invited. Meanwhile, an EU anti-radicalization network already set in motion last year is set to take up its work in September 2011.

Breivik's Ideology

Anders Breivik belongs to this new right-wing populist milieu even as many of the leading luminaries within this growing ideological phenomenon fell over themselves to condemn *his methods*. Furthermore, Breivik expresses admiration for several right-wing leaders, Geert Wilders of the Netherlands and Filip Dewinter of Belgium among them. Much of the content of the 1,518-page treatise he published concurrently with his attacks would resonate with any populist platform in Europe. It is not clear what direct links, if any, Breivik had with established far-right populist groups. If he did have such links, then it would be the task of European law enforcement and intelligence services to uncover them. On the other hand, his links with such groups may only be *ideological* and that the decision to undertake his acts of political violence was solely his own.

Over the past year or so, counterterrorism officials have been warning of a new trend, the so-called

solo terrorist, a fighter trained by organizations like Al Qaeda but then sent off to act on his own, with little or no further correspondence with the group. This tactic reduces the amount of "chatter" — discussions on cell phones and over the Internet — that counterterrorism officials routinely pick up when a terrorist plot is in the offing. "*Breivik represents a new paradigm*," says Janne Kristiansen, head of Norway's domestic intelligence, the Police Security Service. "*He's not a solo terrorist. He's a lone wolf who has been very intent on staying under the radar of the security services by leading a lawful life.*"

Breivik's manifesto exposes his preparations as meticulous, detail-oriented, and obsessive. According to his own testimony he spent several years earning money to finance the attacks. He moved into his mother's apartment to save money on rent and gradually distanced himself from friends and relatives in order to avoid suspicion. During this time he read and contributed to far-right websites, and spent many hours learning how to build a bomb. He leased an isolated farmhouse which provided him with the solitude he needed to prepare and an excuse for buying the huge amount of fertiliser he required for building the bomb he detonated in Oslo. He had hoped the massacre would help to market his manifesto. The manifesto itself is called "2083-A European Declaration of Independence." A rambling potpourri of his own ideas and those lifted almost verbatim from others the manifesto provides considerable insight into his motivations.

His ideology is a mishmash of reactionary Christian cultural values, fuelled by hatred of what he called "Cultural Marxism," Islam, Muslim immigrants in Europe. Page after page had details of his thoughts on politics and society, particularly with what he describes as the decline of the Christian West at the hands of "cultural Marxist" elites (i.e. liberals) who have enabled Islam to spread into Europe. The right-wing Progress Party (to which he once belonged) is condemned as too ready to ingratiate itself to the mainstream establishment and the ruling Labour Party comes in for particularly vicious attack. "*We will ensure that all category A*

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and B traitors (as he calls supporters of Europe's mainstream political parties), the enablers of Islamization and the destroyers of our cultures, nations and societies, will be executed," he raged. At one point he says 45,000 should be killed. He rails against the European Union, the United Nations and other transnational organisations. Breivik insists that Marxism and Islam are growing threats to Norway and Europe in general. Breivik, who described himself as Christian on his Facebook page, writes extensively in the manifesto of his reverence for the medieval Knights Templar. Breivik claims to have founded a movement inspired by the medieval Templars during a 2002 meeting in London with seven rightists from other European countries. He hoped that the newly revitalized group, including his own local chapter, would lead the revolution to save Europe from Marxist and Islamic influences. He describes the new Knights Templar as "a defensive military organization who only seek to protect the peoples of Europe and our cultures from genocide." Breivik, although claiming to stand up for Europe's "Christian culture," in no way links that ideal to true Christian faith. He writes on page 1307 of his online manifesto: *"If you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God then you are a religious Christian. Myself and many more like me do not necessarily have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God. We do however believe in Christianity as a cultural, social, identity and moral platform. This makes us Christian."*

Breivik seems to have drawn inspiration from so-called "counter-jihadist" thinkers, many of them in the United States, that aim to provoke "continuous and increasing outcry" over the dangers posed by Islam. However, the counter-jihadist figure who looms largest in Breivik's manifesto is the pseudonymous Norwegian blogger Fjordman, whom Breivik describes as his favorite author. Fjordman has written that liberal immigration policies and multiculturalism have led to the formation of an Islamized "Eurabia." In one of the essays included in Breivik's manifesto, Fjordman demands a halt to all Muslim immigration and the dismantling of the European Union: "We are being subject to a foreign invasion, and

aiding and abetting a foreign invasion in any way constitutes treason," Fjordman writes. *"If non-Europeans have the right to resist colonization and desire self-determination then Europeans have that right, too. And we intend to exercise it,"* he continues, warning that Europeans might one day be forced to "take the appropriate measures to protect our own security and ensure our national survival."

Breivik was thrilled by such militant sentiments, but he wanted to go a step further by taking direct action. In this context, he proposed that patriotic Christian Europeans, including those who are "Christian agnostics and Christian atheists" join the new Knights Templar – evidencing, once again, a reference to a cultural rather than strictly religious form of Christianity – and become "Justiciar [sic] Knights." They are to be trained as warriors, ready to wage war in defense of Christian values in the coming titanic struggle against cultural Marxism – the establishment – and the "Other" – the foreign Trojan horse that exists within the walls of Europe, Islam and the Muslim immigrants. The new Crusaders should be prepared to act in three phases. During the first phase (1999-2030) a sleeping Europe would be re-awakened to the grim reality of the incoming civil war with Muslim immigrants through "lethal shock attacks" by small, and even one-person "clandestine cells", targeting in particular "traitors" in political parties favorable to immigration, and infrastructures. Breivik realizes that very few people will sympathize with the "very cruel" shock attacks, and the perpetrators will be called assassins and terrorists. It seems clear that he includes his acts of terrorism as examples of these "lethal shock attacks." In the second phase (2030-2070) shock attacks will escalate into guerrilla warfare and coups leading to the overthrow of certain European governments. In the third phase (2070 -2083), the real European civil war between genuine Europeans and Muslim immigrants will erupt. It will end in the killing or deportation of all Muslim from European soil. At end of this conflagration, Europe will be finally liberated from the twin evils of cultural Marxism and Islam.

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Conclusion

Breivik is not a clinically insane individual, though he certainly has delusions of grandeur. This is not uncommon among politicians, why should it be among terrorists? Nor do his ideas, strange as they may seem to mainstream people, lack support among a wide group of people in Europe who feel dismayed by what they see as the current plight of the continent. Indeed, Breivik got his ideas from the more articulate elements of the far-right in Europe. Even though they have come out "strongly" against his methods, there has been little outright condemnation of the ideas that he espoused.

European governments and law enforcement agencies are now scrambling to focus attention on the phenomenon of far-right wing violence. They have a tough job ahead of them. Their whole organizational culture regarding the right-wing movement will have to change. First, these are not the same groups as the small neo-Nazi fanatics that conducted outrageous acts of terror in France, Italy and Germany in the 1980s. The far-right is now more respectable and has more support and larger constituencies. Law enforcement agencies will have to be careful before they begin poking around and suspecting groups of violent propensities. Second, and related to this: they need to differentiate between groups dedicated to violence, individuals who are "lone wolves" and those who are tied to far-right groups. The latter could be engaged in what has been referred to as "leaderless resistance," that is, they take matters into their own hands in accord with the ideas of their group but do not directly involve the group in their supposedly heroic "propaganda of the deed." Last but not the least, law enforcement has to take into consideration whether there might be collaboration between enemies such as Al Qaeda and the far-right in Europe – stranger things have happened. In the 1980s the extreme right and extreme left did collaborate against the state in Italy and it should be noted that Breivik has expressed admiration for the methods of the Al Qaeda.

GLOBAL PATHFINDER II

The ICPVTR Terrorism Database – Global Pathfinder - is a one-stop repository for information on the current and emerging terrorist threat. The database focuses on terrorism and political violence in the Asia-Pacific region – comprising of Southeast Asia, North Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and Oceania.

Global Pathfinder is an integrated database containing comprehensive profiles of terrorist groups, key terrorist personalities, terrorist and counter-terrorist incidents as well as terrorist training camps . It also contains specific details and analyses of significant terrorist attacks in the form of terrorist attack profiles.

In addition to providing the latest information on terrorist attacks and pronouncements, Global Pathfinder also includes over a hundred terrorist training manuals, counter terrorism legislations and conventions, analytical papers on terrorist ideologies, commentaries on terrorist trends and patterns, transcripts of landmark cases, interviews with terrorists as well as photographs from different conflict zones across the world. Further, Global Pathfinder also has a huge collection of jihadi websites, the contents of which are routinely translated and analyzed by our analysts. This analysis helps develop an understanding of the developments in the ideological spectrum and trajectory of the terrorist threat, in both in tactical as well as strategic space.

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Pheu Thai Victory: A Stroke of Luck for the Deep South?

Wang Zhihao*

With the victory of the Pheu Thai party, all eyes are on Thailand's new Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra. There are many who are waiting to see if she can implement critical changes that would address the insurgency in the southern provinces.

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On 3 July 2011, the Yingluck Shinawatra-led Pheu Thai party secured a decisive victory in the 2011 Thai General Election. The win marked the fifth change in Prime Minister for Thailand in five years. As the insurgency in South Thailand continue to smolder, all eyes are on Yingluck Shinawatra to see if she can implement critical changes and succeed where her predecessors have failed. To do so, she must tread lightly and carefully. To preserve the survival of her premiership, Yingluck must manage a potentially antagonistic military and hold together the deeply divided fragments of Thai Society.

The backdrop: Thailand's Volatile Political Climate:

The 2006 ouster of Yingluck's brother, Thaksin Shinawatra, kick started a rapid change in governments, a phenomenon which had a number of worrying implications for the restive southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. Thus far, Thailand's attempt at democracy has been described by many observers as a tragic cycle of coups, protests and crackdowns, with the military and opposition supporters taking turns to pull their weight in order to install the party of their choice in office.

After anti-Thaksin protesters (popularly known as the Yellow shirts) paralyzed two international airports in their bid to get Somchai Wongsawat out

of office in 2008, the Red Shirts (pro-Thaksin) answered in kind by occupying Bangkok in 2010 in order to topple the Abhisit Vejjajiva administration. Despite the clear electoral outcome of the 2011 elections, signs of discontent still abound. There are allegations that Yingluck allowed a banned politician (Thaksin) to manage her Pheu Thai campaign, and that she participated in vote buying. It is abundantly clear that the country remains deeply divided even in the wake of a popular mandate.

These issues means that before Yingluck can truly focus on the problems in the south, she may have to deal first with a host of problems that could confront Bangkok. Similar situations have dogged previous administrations as well, relegating the southern Thai insurgency to that of a forgotten conflict.

While there have been substantive efforts by previous administrations to tackle the root causes of the conflict, the short lifespan of these governments means that none of these efforts arrive at any meaningful endgame. Abhisit Vejjajiva's efforts at economically restructuring the south and decentralizing the power of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) away from the military has had limited success. While there has been a significant increase in the average household income under Abhisit's administration,

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(L) 2008 File photograph of a bomb blast in Narathiwat, one of the provinces plagued by insurgency in southern Thailand. Image Credit: MADAREE TOHLALA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES at [Foreign Policy Blogs](#) (R) August 2011 photo of Yingluck Shinawatra in her official uniform as Thailand's newest Prime Minister. Image Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

there was little done to curb the violence that wracks the region. Before he could further pursue his campaign of justice and development in the south, he was forced to turn his attention to Red Shirt protests. The protests eventually led to the holding of an election which paved the way for Yingluck Shinawatra to come to power.

Before any progressive effort can be undertaken to resolve the problems in the south, the present government must ensure that there is an atmosphere of political stability. Should Yingluck's proposals be implemented, future political upheavals will only serve to derail any massive investments and effectively render moot prior headways made.

Yingluck's party is already off to a troubling start, seeing that her party did not win a single seat in the three southern provinces. This might be an indication of the lack of support for her proposal to turn the south into a special administrative zone much like the Pattaya City Administration or the result of a seething resentment against her party which is essentially a reincarnation of her brother's party. Whichever holds true,

the new government must carefully weigh its decisions if it does not want to be perceived as an unwelcome change to the already troubled region. Yingluck will stand a chance to effectively lead in the South if she continues with the programs of the previous administration which have at least been warmly received by the people, even if they have yet to gain traction with regard to stemming the insurgency. Among these was instating civilian control over the Southern Border Province Administrative Centre (SBPAC) as well as enacting new policies in accordance with feedback from the local communities.

The Role of the Thai Military in Politics and the Deep South

One of the greatest challenges facing Yingluck in her rise to office is the prospect of having to deal with a military that is fundamentally opposed to her party from the very beginning. The Thai military has a history of getting intimately involved in the nation's politics, having staged the coup in 2006. It can be recalled that in

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2005, then Chief of Army General Sondhi Bunyaratgalin assured that a coup against Thaksin will not take place. Therefore, even if the Thai Army has pledged to respect the results of this year's election, one cannot dismiss their capability to stage another coup. Recently, General Prayuth Chan-ocha's lambasted the Pheu Thai Party on national television and accused it of opposing the monarchy. He also criticized Yingluck's proposals for the south. It should not come as a surprise if the military would not give its full cooperation to the new administration.

It is a fact that if there is any significant headway to be made in the deep south, the military and the government will have to make serious concessions toward each other. The military also needs to answer to longstanding violations and abuse of human rights in the south. This stems from the controversial Emergency Decree that was first enacted in 2005. The decree granted the military with emergency powers which allowed them to carry out arrests and other operations without hard evidence and still be immune from the law.

There was an impression that the Abhisit administration was under pressure not to antagonize the military, having extended the Emergency Decree several times. It is a challenge for Yingluck's administration to acknowledge that the Emergency Decree just serves to deepen the rift in the southern provinces. The new administration must convince the Royal Thai Army to be more reserved in its use of force so that more reconciliation measures can be implemented.

The Thaksin Factor

On more than one occasion, Yingluck had to fend off a barrage of allegations that she is essentially a proxy for Thaksin Shinawatra. The former Prime Minister is a political figure who is revered as much as he is despised in the country. This is even more pertinent in the southern provinces, where he is known to be behind the implementation of the Emergency Decree. It was also under his administration that the bloody Krue Se and Tak Bai massacres took place.

Whether Yingluck will extend the mandate of the Emergency Decree (it was extended for 60 days after 12 July 2011) or not, will be seen as major marker of how militarized her approach will be to the issues in the southern provinces. A close watch is also being kept on whether or not she sticks to her promise to give the restive provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala greater autonomy. Her actions on these will serve as a benchmark for her credibility as a politician.

Reconciliation is the Key

One of Yingluck's catch phrases during the election rallies holds the answer to the political conundrum that the south, and to a certain extent, the whole of the country is facing. "National Reconciliation" on all levels, be it between the Red and Yellow shirts or the Government and the Military, is key to lasting peace. Without a stable base from which to operate from, the new administration cannot hope to have meaningful improvements to the situation in the Deep South. Likewise, it will be difficult to inspire trust should the government and military continue their highly paradoxical and polarized campaign of generous conciliatory policies and indiscriminate violence. For Yingluck, the path ahead for her country is fraught with instability, but should she be able to grasp the key to greater intra-government stability and inter-agency coherence, her government may well begin inching towards a better future for the South and for the rest of Thailand.

2005 File photograph of Thailand's former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, the brother of current PM Yingluck Shinawatra. There are allegations that Yingluck is just a proxy for her brother.
Image Source:
[United States Department of Defense](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/pictures/2005/07/05/070505-0001-001.htm)



The Impact of Osama Bin Laden's death on the Landscape of Global Jihad

Ganesan Annamalai*

The death of Osama Bin Laden has both short and long term implications for the Al Qaeda, its allied groups and sympathizers and even those who combat terrorism. It is important to remember that terrorism did not stop with Bin Laden's death and that there is still more to be done to mitigate the threat of terror.

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On 1 May 2011, after nearly a decade of searching for the leader of Al Qaeda, an operation was mounted by United States Special Forces to kill Osama Bin Laden. Whether there are far reaching and lasting impacts on global terrorism because of such a monumental operation is still yet to be determined. It has short and long term effects on terrorist organizations, their sympathizers and those who combat terrorism. While it is an achievement that the threat posed by Bin Laden has been eliminated, it is important to remember that terrorism still exists beyond his death. Also, even though most of the world recognized that Bin Laden's death was necessary, this has also led to some negative impacts. There were retaliatory attacks in Pakistan, threats of further attacks, outpourings of support for Bin Laden as a martyr and eulogies filled with promise of continued efforts by extremists and sympathizers. It is evident that most groups will continue with the use of violence to achieve extremist goals by emulating Bin Laden and rendering him martyrdom. They will continue to preach, recruit and propagate their beliefs. These are the areas that must be focused on to curb the growth of terrorism in a post-Bin Laden world.

Impact on Al Qaeda

Osama bin Laden's death meant that Al Qaeda was dealt with a psychological blow. Bin Laden was not just a highly influential spiritual leader he was also intimately involved with the Al Qaeda's terrorist operations right up to the day he was killed. Bin Laden left behind a potent ideology that will be followed and memorialized even after his death. This ideology will continue to radicalize segments of the global Islamic population. However, his death has also caused significant consequences to the psyche of Al Qaeda and its sympathizers. The fact that Bin Laden, the man behind the 11 September 2001 World Trade Center bombings, was killed after nearly a decade of evading American troops only proved to Al Qaeda and the world that no one and no organization is infallible. This fear of mortality of its own members might be the reasoning driving the threats of revenge issued by Al Qaeda.

Jihadist Response

As news of Bin Laden's death erupted, Jihadists around the world, both through the internet and other channels of communication, expressed not just condolences, many also delivered eulogies and poems celebrating him as a

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Saif al Adel (left) and Ayman Al Zawahiri (R) were the top contenders as replacement for Osama Bin Laden. Both were highly qualified to lead the Al Qaeda but it was Zawahiri who was announced as Bin Laden's replacement.

Image Credits: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

martyr. Asad al-Jihad 2, a prominent member of the Jihadist internet community, gave Bin Laden a eulogy stating “*Islam was fought for centuries and attacked from all sides, so our knight was a dam against them; he thwarted them with his chest*” There were also outpourings of condolences released from extremist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan (Afghan Taliban) and the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI, also known as Al Qaeda in Iraq) along with lesser known groups such as Jaishul Islam and Fathul Islam.

Media groups that have shown sympathy towards extremists such as Al-Fajar Media, Shumukh Islamic Network and Ansar Mujahideen Network also extended their condolences. Alongside proclamations of sorrow, extremists groups have also released statements of anger. These announcements of promised revenge for Bin Laden’s death are further evidence that vigilance is necessary. One internet Jihadist threatened revenge by declaring “*We come to slaughter you O worshippers of the cross, and we are determined to do so. We make your days full of fear and horror.*” Extremists have also suggested different plots to exact revenge on the United States and President Barack Obama. One such suggestion was a plot to kill Michelle Obama, the

First Lady of the United States, because doing so would “*break the psyche of the black dog*” (referring to President Obama). There have also been plots suggested to target industry and media officials, specifically, the CEO of KBR (and many of its top officials), CEO of Lockheed Martin, and the Vice President of Halliburton. Other companies that were mentioned were Blackwater, Brookings Institution, General Dynamics, LVHM-Moet Hennessy, NASA and the US Department of Defense. The Al Qaeda also issued its own threats and incitements of violence telling its followers to carry out individual acts of Jihad by targeting “*influential public figures.*”

The threats of revenge uttered by extremists are not empty or idle threats. Since the death of Bin Laden there have been 87 terrorist attacks in Pakistan which have killed 451 people and injured 654 others. There were at least five grievous assaults conclusively associated as retaliatory attacks. These were the attacks on the 13th, 22nd, 25th, and 26th May and 10 June. A total of 166 people were killed in these attacks while 259 people were wounded. All of the targets were government, police or military sites. Recently there were also new threats publicly disseminated by known extremist groups. On 29 July 2011, a commander of the Tehreek-

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e-Taliban Pakistan threatened to carry out attacks similar to those carried out in the Mehran Naval Base in Karachi on 22 May 2011.

Bin Laden's successor

Part of the reason the Al Qaeda is still able to pose a threat was its ability to choose a new leader and ensure its continuity. There was some confusion as to who would replace Bin Laden as the leader of Al Qaeda. Saif al Adel and Ayman al-Zawahiri were both strong contenders during the interim period. Both men were considered qualified for the position. Saif al Adel had multiple roles in Al Qaeda under Bin Laden's leadership. He has been Al Qaeda's chief of security, the third highest position in the organization, since the death of Mohammed Atef in November 2001. Prior to that appointment, he also ran Al Qaeda's media committee. He is thought to have arranged the filming of a number of Bin Laden's videos. These videos were often broadcasted internationally for fundraising and propaganda purposes. Al Adel is wanted by the United States and its allies in connection with the training of Somali fighters who killed 18 US servicemen in Mogadishu in 1993 and the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Al Adel is also suspected of giving explosives training to the 9/11 attackers.

Ayman al-Zawahiri, on the other hand, was considered to be Al Qaeda's second in command and as such was the natural candidate for the top position after Bin Laden's death. Zawahiri was the head of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ). He helped create the Al Qaeda and merged it with the EIJ. In Al Qaeda, he was the head of the information committee and was Bin Laden's close personal advisor and lieutenant. He was said to have been intimately involved with the 9/11 attacks. Zawahiri is a qualified surgeon and he is fluent in Arabic, English and French. On 16 June 2011, six weeks after Bin Laden's death, Zawahiri was announced as the new head of Al Qaeda.

The Global Jihad beyond Osama bin Laden

Even without Osama Bin Laden, the global jihad movement continues to inflict violence. There are three main regions affected by extremists, the Middle East,

South Asia and Southeast Asia. Extremists in these regions continue largely unhindered although largely upset by Bin Laden's death.

Middle East

Bin Laden's death did little to change the political atmosphere and security situation in the Middle East. Contrary to Bin Laden's recorded statement, which was released by Al Sahab, the "Arab Spring" was not spurred by and will continue to surge ahead without the help of Al Qaeda. Bin Laden's pre-recorded statement was addressed to Muslims and he claimed that Al Qaeda had a hand in the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia. With regards to terrorist attacks in the short term, the operations of Al Qaeda in the Middle East will probably be affected because it would no longer benefit from Bin Laden's superb networking skills and financing abilities. In the long term, terrorism operations will continue to be carried out without regard to or being affected too tumultuously by Bin Laden's death. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether Al Qaeda's network of support and financing will grow or even stay steady as it did under Bin Laden's control.

South Asia

Terrorist organizations in South Asia will continue to carry out operations. In fact, Bin Laden's death has invoked angered messages and retaliatory attacks from various groups. As earlier mentioned, there have been 87 terrorist attacks in Pakistan alone since Bin Laden's death- five of which were said to be direct retaliation attacks. Al Qaeda, though it has lost a leader, will not be easily subdued easily and the Pakistani Taliban in Pakistan has been overwhelmingly influenced by Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. The death of Bin Laden has only served to motivate the group to carry on. Extremist organizations have hailed Bin Laden's death as an act of martyrdom for Islam and in the long run, this alleged act of martyrdom may serve as inspiration and ideology for others.

Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia, the death of Bin Laden has resulted in an outpour of condolences and threats from groups that Bin Laden and Al Qaeda influenced, trained,

The Impact of Osama Bin Laden's death on the Landscape of Global Jihad

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financed and radicalized such as the Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia and the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines. Bin Laden's alleged martyrdom is seen as an opportunity by these groups to create more destruction and carry out attacks.

Conclusion

The death of Osama bin Laden is a success story of solid military planning and excellent operational execution along with outstanding cultivation of intelligence. It has, unfortunately, not curtailed the invariable threat of terrorism. Though it might have given pause to terrorist organizations because of the thought that no one is invulnerable, it has not slowed down attempts to spread terrorist ideology and violence. It is important to understand that the impact of Bin Laden's death is not as significant, as some would believe, in stemming the tide of all extremist terrorism. The crux of extremism does not rely on any one man and getting rid of the upper echelon of the organization does not ensure the destruction of extremist organizations. This was the case with Osama Bin Laden. His death does not signify the end of the global jihad and now Ayman Al Zawahiri has taken his place and his leadership is believed to add a whole new dimension to Al Qaeda. The real solution to defeating violent extremism is to counter and challenge the ideology of such individuals and organizations.

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Topical areas of interest are terrorism and political violence, terrorism and organized crime, homeland security, religion and violence, internal conflicts and terrorism, and all other areas of security broadly defined.

Article length could be anywhere between 800 to 1500 words. Submissions must be made before the 15th of every month for editing purposes and for inclusion in the next month's edition.

Electronic copies of the articles (MS Word format) may be submitted to the editors at the following address: isdiane@ntu.edu.sg

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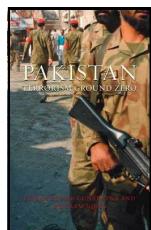
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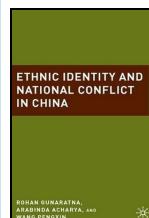
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- Pakistan: Terrorism Ground Zero (Reaktion Books, 2011) by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna and Mr. Khuram Iqbal



- International Aviation and Terrorism: Evolving Threats, Evolving Security (Routledge 2009) by Dr. John Harrison



- Ethnic Identity and National Conflict in China (Palgrave Macmillan 22 June 2010) by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, Dr. Arabinda Acharya and Mr. Wang Pengxin



- Targeting Terrorist Financing: International Cooperation and New Regimes (Routledge 2009) by Dr. Arabinda Acharya