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Rethinking Classical Jihad Ideas

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This article highlights the need for re-interpretation of classical jihad ideas in general and the obligation of reclaiming Muslim historical land from the hand of non-Muslim states under defensive jihad as propagated by extremist groups.

Addressing misinterpretation of jihad by extremist groups is important. However, it is also equally important for Muslim scholars to look deep into the Muslim intellectual heritage on jihad produced over hundreds of years.

This heritage is a product of various periods of Muslim history. Nevertheless, its importance and influence to Muslim understanding of religion cannot be underestimated because it remains a critical and core component of Islamic studies in all major Islamic universities.

Unfortunately, it has also become a reference point for extremists to validate their vicious ideology that tarnishes Islam and Muslims.

Since this is a product of a period that is different from the present, and the fact that extremists seek to manipulate some of these ideas, it is necessary for the contemporary Muslim scholars to

review and rethink them in order to: a) give new interpretation to them, b) offer alternative ideas to replace them, or c) debunk them for irrelevance or serious negative implications they carry in today's time.

This is also in line with the spirit of *ijtihad* that calls upon Muslim scholars to generate new ideas that are beneficial and refute old ones that have become obsolescent, albeit in a respectful and sound manner.

Two Classical Ideas & Implications

Two ideas of jihad found in the classical Muslim intellectual heritage are relevant here: 1) the duty to wage *jihad al-talab* (offensive jihad) against non-Muslim territories until they become part of *Dar Al-Islam* (Land of Islam) or recognise the



Congregation of Muslim scholars that reviewed the classical classification of lands to *Dar Al-Islam* and *Dar Al-Harb* and affirmed peace, not war, as the basis of Muslim-non-Muslim relations during Mardin Conference on 27-28 March 2010.

Source: Mawtani http://mawtani.al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/iii/features/iraqtoday/2010/04/12/feature-05

authority of *Dar Al-Islam*, and 2) the duty to reclaim all lands that were historically part of *Dar Al-Islam*.

Regardless of the context against which these ideas were discussed in classical literature, there are ramifications in terms of national security. Firstly, for a non-Muslim ruler, having a neighbouring Muslim ruler who is seriously committed to the idea of offensive jihad would indeed be a major concern. This has been recognised in international relations study on the role of ideas and beliefs in shaping a state leader's course of action or as causal mechanisms in foreign policy, especially in studies on operational codes written by Stephen G. Walker and Mark Schafer in the article *Belief System as Causal Mechanism in World Politics: An Overview of Operational Code Analysis*.

Secondly, the two classical jihad ideas are also key ideas propagated by extremist groups, especially Al Qaeda to justify waging jihad in the name of Islam all over the world and to instigate Muslims to take up arms individually and encourage hostilities toward non-Muslim states and governments.

Thirdly, using scholars' opinion found in classical works, extremist groups argue that it is obligatory to reclaim all previous Muslim territories which have come under non-Muslim rule today, such as Palestine, Chad, Eritrea, Chechnya, Romania, Bulgaria, Spain, Hungary and Singapore, and armed jihad is imperative in order to fulfil this obligation. This would require a Muslim state, individual or organisation to instigate or wage armed jihad against the countries that rule those lands and, to a lesser degree, to subvert or cause the fall of the ruling government or its annexation by a Muslim state. Until this obligation is fulfilled, all Muslims are considered to be living in sin.

This would also mean that individual Muslims could take the initiative to form a group and the group could network with similar groups across

national boundaries to fulfill this obligation. The emergence of transnational groups like Al Qaeda which continue to subvert governments and subsequently wage jihad all over the world explains this dynamic.

The security ramifications of the two classical ideas are not theoretical. They have motivated some Muslims to undermine their own governments, as seen in the London-based Al-Muhajiroun. The terror plots by citizens or permanent residents in non-Muslim countries, who were inspired by Al Qaeda's militant jihad, are testimonies to this threat. There are many examples which include:

- The Singapore cell of the Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah made up of Singapore citizens that planned attacks on various Western targets in the country.
- Five individuals, who were mainly naturalised citizens of the United States, plotted attacks on the Fort Dix military base in New Jersey.
- Six Yemeni-Americans popularly referred to as the "Lackawanna Six" of the Buffalo cell provided support to Al Qaeda.

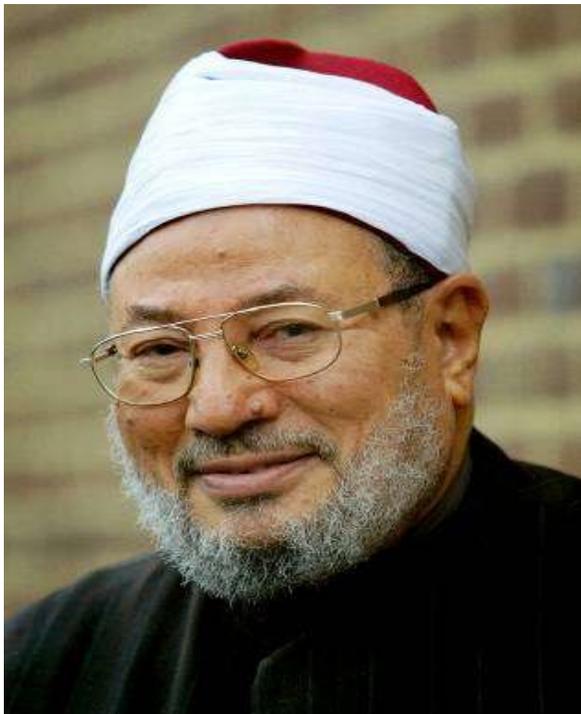
These subversive activities against the interests of non-Muslim countries also pose serious national security concerns for Muslim countries when they were conducted within their territories, as seen in the bombings in Indonesia. Thus addressing these ideas has direct relevance and significance in countering threat of extremists' call for jihad and inoculating Muslims against it.

The On-Going

The attempt to rethink and reinterpret the two classical ideas is still on-going. It must be noted that this attempt has been initiated long before the emergence of the current scourge of extremist jihad. Some of the prominent figures in this attempt are Muhammad `Abduh and Mahmud

Shaltut, both Grand Shaykhs of Al-Azhar, Sa'id Ramadan Al-Buti, and Yusuf Al-Qaradawi whose work on the jurisprudence of jihad was published in 2009.

The post-9/11 era has witnessed a new development, which is publication of the works by former Muslim militants who have renounced their violent ideology. These militants were from the Egyptian Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyah, Egyptian Al-Jihad and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. They have produced more than 25 volumes of writings in which they review their previously held violent ideologies and criticise groups like Al Qaeda. However, a look into materials produced by Muslim scholars and former militants on this regard shows that this is only particularly so in reference to the idea of *jihad al-talab* and the argument that underlies it (i.e. the abrogation of all



Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, author of *Fiqh Al-Jihad* (Jurisprudence of Jihad), published in 2009.

Source: The Muslim Observer <http://muslimmedianetwork.com/mmn/?p=4449>

previous revelations after the revelation of the verse in the ninth chapter of the Quran).

Scholars have offered three responses on the idea of *jihad al-talab*. They assert that the jihad is defensive in character, and argue that there is no scriptural evidence to support the abrogation claim. They hold that verses on jihad cannot be interpreted in isolation. Instead these verses must be reconciled with other verses to produce a true understanding of jihad in Islam. In this respect, Muslim scholars have agreed that verses whose meanings are general and unconditional, i.e. to wage jihad against all infidels, must be interpreted as conditional (i.e. to wage jihad against aggressors only). For these scholars, *jihad al-talab*, to them, contradicts the Islamic principles they uphold which is that the basis of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims is peace and that difference of faith is not a justification for jihad.

Secondly, the scholars have sought to contextualise the classical strand in two ways: 1) understand the classical view within its historical context, and 2) offer a modern understanding of them by tapping on other modern fields of study.

On the former, they argue that views found in classical works were shaped by the constant wars between Muslims and non-Muslims (the Romans and the Persians) and the political culture then of war being the preferred means of solving conflicts between states. On the latter, based on theories in the study of international relations, that the view was fundamentally a response to the prevailing anarchic international system. They offered the perspective of offensive realism, which holds that the anarchic international system provides strong incentives for states to continuously strive for maximum accumulation of power in relation to other states so as to guarantee its own hegemonic power. In doing so, states pursue expansionist policies when and where the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs.

A non-hegemonic power in an anarchic international system would be constantly concerned that other states would use force against it.

Thirdly, scholars stress upon the importance of understanding jihad in the light of international conventions, which recognise self-defence as the only justification for war. They argue that:

- the underlying values and principles of international law on war are similar to *fiqh al-jihad* (jihad jurisprudence), which seeks to limit the destructive nature of war by imposing a code of conduct;
- the principles of Islamic jurisprudence recognise customs and conventions as secondary sources of law, and Muslim scholars are in agreement that the law should be tailored, adjusted and changed in accordance to the context of time and place as long they do not contravene any principles of the *shari`ah*;
- failure to abide by international conventions will put the Muslim states, communities and Islam itself in a negative light. Muslim states also risk being sanctioned, to the detriment of the *ummah*.

The Unattended

However, the same cannot be said about the vision of reclaiming land that historically belong to Muslim as a religious obligation. A review of various works on jihad, particularly from the mainstream Muslim scholars as exemplified by names mentioned above, reveals a puzzling lack of attempts to study, deconstruct or contextualise it. They have not responded to the extremists on the issue of lands historically belonging to Muslim, and neither have they attempted to reconcile the classical view on reclaiming occupied Muslim territories with the modern conception of the nation-state.

The closest position with regard of addressing the vision of these lands as a religious obligation has been that of Abdullahi An-Na'im in *Islamic Ambivalence to Political Violence: Islamic Law and International Terrorism*. He suggests that, in the current context, the idea of jihad as "the unilateral use of force by Muslims in pursuit of political objectives and outside the institutional framework of international legality and the rule of law in general" should be abandoned. He seeks to fully assimilate Islamic jurisprudence of jihad into existing international law and reinterpret them through the contemporary framework of international law and the political system.

However, this perspective only addresses the fundamentals of *jihad al-talab* in order to prevent Muslims from waging wars against other states in the name of jihad. Accepting the current framework would only indirectly suggest that Muslims must forego the right to claim those lands which were under Muslim rule and presently part of legitimate sovereign states. What has not been addressed are issues such as why armed jihad in this regard is considered irrelevance or obsolete today, why the classical view has to be reinterpreted with new perspectives, and why the current changes require new thinking.

One possible reason for this is that most Muslim scholars who specialise in traditional Islamic studies which represent the mainstream strand have not come to terms with the modern international system which is based on the concept of the nation-state. Despite all Muslim countries where the scholars live in not being free from the nation-state framework, a majority of them remain hopeful that one day all Muslim countries can be reunited under a single polity, and a return to Islamic glory is still imagined in the form of the old Muslim empire that stretched from Andalusia to the Malay Archipelago. This contributes to the fear that rethinking this idea would mean forgoing the lost lands. As a result, little effort has

been advanced into rethinking the configuration of the state system of the countries that had previously been part of Muslim territory.

Understandably, this relates to the fact that the modern nation-state system did not emerge out of the Muslims' own tradition or initiative. It was a European solution to the wars that had plagued the continent for decades. It was realised through the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648 which brought an end to dynastic competition and conflicts between the Protestant and Catholic communities of Europe. As a result, Europe was divided into demarcated territories where the right of a prince to rule over the territory and the people living within it was recognised. This eventually led to the emergence of the modern concept of sovereign states.

Although the Muslim world had not been free from internal wars, a multilateral settlement such as the Treaties of Westphalia or their equivalent had never occurred in Muslim history. Even during the period of multiple dynasties within the Muslim world, the idea of a unitary polity was emphasized.

The state system practiced in the Muslim world today had been introduced by the European colonialists as exemplified by the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement between France and the United Kingdom for the control of the Middle East, and the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 for the control of the Malay Archipelago.

With this background, and in addition to the fear of giving away the lost Muslim lands, the nation-state concept is viewed by Muslim scholars with suspicion as a colonial idea to the effect that its famous principle of divide never got a positive place in traditional Islamic studies.

Conclusion & Suggestions

It is hoped that there will be serious efforts by mainstream Muslim scholars to look into rethink-

ing the part of defensive jihad that requires Muslims today to reclaim the lost Muslim lands.

In addition, much can still be done to strengthen on-going efforts to contextualise jihad in the contemporary situation.

As a way forward, it is suggested that a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of jihad be promoted and introduced at traditional Muslim institutes of learning such as *madrasah* and *pesantren*, as well as at the universities.

Currently, this process is only found at Western universities within the study of Islam or related disciplines such as international relations. Most traditional Muslim institutions of learning still rely heavily, or solely, on classical works. Even the reformist texts used in comparison with the classical works are largely rooted in traditional Islamic jurisprudence. There is little comparison with modern international law and almost no attempts to integrate with it. The study of other disciplines such as international relations in order to understand different perspectives is rare.

These initiatives must be taken by Muslims themselves so as to avoid the perception of colonialism by Western intellectuals. However, non-Muslims can play a part by objectively engaging Muslim leaders and scholars.

In addition, a few other suggestions can be made:

- to produce more Muslim scholars of traditional backgrounds specialising in jihad from a multi-disciplinary perspective by offering scholarships;
- to encourage research that seeks to integrate traditional jihad studies with international law, and a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of jihad in Muslim institutions of learning;

- to encourage platforms for Muslim scholars of various backgrounds to revisit the view of traditional jihad with the purpose of adapting it to modern contexts. An example is the Mardin Conference of 2010 which brought together 15 scholars to review Ibn Taymiyah's fatwa, thereby producing a resolution to abandon the categorisation of lands into *Dar Al-Islam* and *Dar Al-Harb* (Land of War), and accept peace as the basis of relations between Muslim and non-Muslims.

With multi-disciplinary specialists on jihad, efforts to reach out to Muslims and Muslim students; the reformulation of the *fiqh al-jihad* curriculum studied at traditional Islamic learning institutions; re-visiting of traditional interpretations of jihad; and encouraging of debate on this topic among Muslims, may all be facilitated more effectively.

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FAREWELL, NADISHA

The editorial team would like to extend its appreciation to Nadisha Sirisena for her efforts as CTTA's Associate Editor in the past year. We wish her all the very best for the future!

Recent Campaigns of Islamic Moderation

Taufiq bin Radja Nurul Bahri

The inefficacy of a solely military approach to counterterrorism has led efforts to explore alternative and complimentary means, one of which is promoting moderation to act as a barrier against extremism as well as an ethical empowerment of society.

The Global War on Terror has entered its second decade and may continue indefinitely. While much focus has been put on military and geopolitical dimensions of counter terrorism, less has been put on its other important facets such as ideology, culture and history. RAND corporation conducted studies on how terrorist groups have been defeated and the assessment showed firstly that, throughout the history of the post-9/11 counterterrorism campaign, only 7% of the efforts were successful through military means. The report also illustrated that the number of terrorist attacks attributed to Al Qaeda spiked dramatically between 2002 and 2007 despite the all-out assault on terrorism. The research concluded that “military force has rarely been the primary reason that terrorist groups end, and a few groups have ended by achieving victory.”

With in view, counterterrorism agencies have been scouring alternative or complimentary means to conventional counterterrorism strategies. Many have then come to understand that terrorism is a by-product of extremism. Overcoming the former requires the right solutions to the latter. Studies show that there are many factors that contribute to the radicalization of a person or a group and there is no known single path. Counter-ideology and rehabilitation programmes have been introduced as alternative means to the present scheme of counterterrorism efforts.

Practitioners, however, felt that the time had come for a non-reactive means to counterterrorism; one that addresses not only of condoning extremism but rather proactively guides society to a balanced life. This came in the form of promot-

ing moderation, not simply as a counterterrorism approach, but as an ethical program that instills values of moderation as a barrier against extremist tendencies and actions.

The rationale for having a programme promoting moderation is four-fold. Firstly, it represents a viable addition to current military-centered counterterrorism strategies. Secondly, it provides counterterrorism with a more comprehensive outlook. Thirdly, it attracts cooperation from different sectors of the community hence producing effective and concerted counter measures. Lastly, it provides an ideological barrier against extremist ideas.

The Muslim community first took up this option not only as a cultivation of value and ethics but also as a rediscovery of their identity. For Muslims, not only did the terrorists hijack the planes on 9/11 but also their religion by proclaiming to be the defenders of the faith. Scholars of Islam rushed in to clear the name of Islam from the damage done by the terrorists’ propaganda. The hallmark of Islam is moderation. Muslim scholars had to embark on a journey of rediscovering this lost value and striving hard to instill it into society. Some of the current campaigns of Islamic moderation spearheaded by different individuals and organizations are described below.

Current Campaigns

Individual Efforts

a) Yusuf al-Qaradawi is a renowned Muslim scholar and Trustee of the Oxford Center for Is-

Islamic Studies who has had much engagement with counterterrorism efforts. Qaradawi wrote *fiqhul jihad*, a treatise expounding the true definition of jihad as a response towards exploitation of the concept of jihad by extremists. Qaradawi also contributed much to the promotion of moderation. Many titles on the topic of moderation have been written by him, including *kalimaat fil wasatiyyah wa maalimha*, which was published in 2009.

b) *Enlightened moderation* is a term coined by former President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, which refers to rationalizing thoughts, being on the positive side of life, and preferring optimism over extremism. The strategy of enlightened moderation was unveiled by Musharraf during the OIC Summit Conference at Malaysia in 2002.

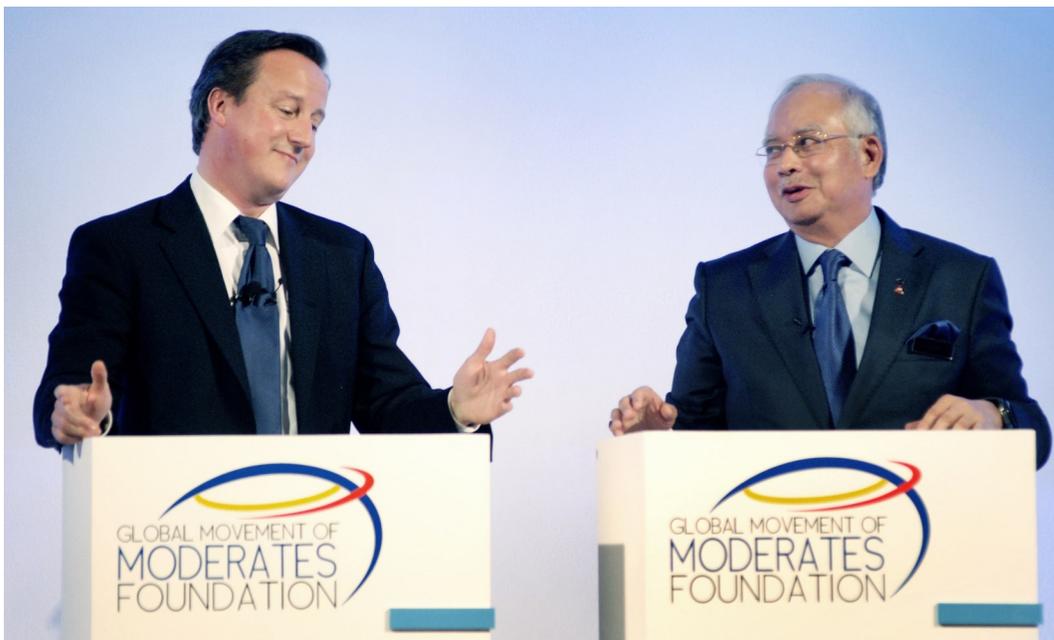
Musharraf explained his position in an opinion piece published in various newspapers in 2004. His plan for enlightened moderation has two facets. It calls "for the Muslim world to shun militancy and extremism and adopt the path of socio-economic uplift" and "for the West, and the United States in particular, to seek to resolve all political

disputes with justice and to aid in the socio-economic betterment of the deprived Muslim world."

c) Professor Tan Sri Mohd. Kamal Hassan, a renowned professor of Islamic studies from the International Islamic University Malaysia, wrote *Voice of Islamic Moderation from the Malay World*, which compiles evidences from the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions that extol the essence of Islam as a religion of moderation.

Global Movement of Moderates

The Prime Minister of Malaysia first mooted the idea of establishing a Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) when he delivered his maiden speech at the 65th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 27 September 2010. Since then, the initiative has garnered support from many world leaders. At the 18th ASEAN Summit in Jakarta, the leaders of ASEAN member states, in the Chairman's Statement on 8 May 2011, welcomed the initiative to establish the GMM as one of ASEAN's positive contributions in shaping global developments. They have now tasked the



David Cameron delivering a guest lecture for the GMM in Malaysia, April 2012.

Source:

http://www.gmomf.org/index.php?_m=photogallery>ype=albums&lang=en

ASEAN Secretariat to produce a concept paper on how ASEAN can promote this idea at the global level.

The GMM's conceptual standpoint is in embracing moderation as an important ASEAN value. Moderation comes with a high degree of tolerance, trust and mutual understanding, in addition tousing dialogue as an important tool to resolve disputes. The practice of moderation in ASEAN should not just be confined to religion alone, but should be all-encompassing to include economic, political, cultural and social dimensions.

Al-Qaradawi Center for Islamic Moderation and Renewal

The Al-Qaradawi Center for Islamic Moderation and Renewal under the Qatar Foundation conducts research on moderate thinking, spreading the ideas surrounding it and fighting extremist streams of thought. The Qatar-based center has the principal objective of the promotion and cultivation of moderation in society as a moral barrier against extremist ideas.

Conclusion

This article has explained the development and evolution of counterterrorism approaches. The questionable efficacy of the sole reliance on military measures in the combat against terrorism has been addressed through the introduction of non-military options such as ideology and rehabilitation programmes.

Promotion of moderation provides an alternative means that covers the ethical grounds required for societal resilience in facing the challenges of extremism and terrorism. We are fortunate that all major religions and civilizations advocate moderation as a way of life. Society needs to return to their traditions and rediscover their understandings of moderation.

While the Muslim communities have begun their campaign of the moderation project, much still

needs to be done. Moderation discourses needs to be assessed academically and the theoretical products of research need to be practically applied to society. Moderation studies also must include research on best practices for application of moderation in the context of societies as a whole.

—
Taufiq bin Radja Nurul Bahri is an Analyst in the Moderation Studies Programme at ICPVTR.

MODERATION STUDIES PROGRAMME

In late 2012, ICPVTR introduced its newest initiative, the Moderation Studies Programme. The programme's objective is to promote and cultivate moderation in society as a moral barrier against extremist ideas.

The programme's key activities include: conducting interdisciplinary and multi-perspective study on the concept of moderation, assessing best approaches to promoting moderation and socializing ideas of moderation. The Moderation Studies Programme has also conducted research on representations of moderation in Islam, as well as defining Islamic moderation and its attributes.

On the Road to Damascus? Jihadists in the Syrian Civil War

Ahmed S. Hashim

One of the most critical aspects of the civil war in Syria is the growing involvement of extremist groups including local militant Islamist and foreign jihadist elements which cast a shadow over the prospects of long-term stability of the country, with or without Bashar al-Assad.

The Syrian civil war (2011-present) has earned the dubious distinction of being among the bloodiest and most destructive wars in contemporary Middle Eastern history. The death toll is estimated at 60,000 and is rising by the day. The country's infrastructure is in shambles and vast swathes of major cities – including one steeped in history such as Aleppo – have sustained enormous damage.

The Syrian government continues to have a formidable military at its disposal; this military capacity for causing severe damage through the use of artillery, helicopter gunships, fixed-wing aircraft and surface-to-surface missiles shows no sign of abating. The rebels are fighting back and doing so as savagely and as mercilessly as the regime. What began as an uprising demanding

reform turned into a rebellion calling for the overthrow of the Bashar al-Assad regime dominated by the minority 'Alawite sect.

Syria is now in the throes of an increasingly sectarian civil war with ethno-sectarian violence primarily pitting Sunnis against 'Alawites. However, minorities — Christians, Druze, and Kurds — have also been caught in the crossfire. The country shows signs of falling apart as a cohesive nation-state, and not surprisingly, *The Economist* recently ran a story with the evocative headline: "The country formerly known as Syria."

A multi-ethnic and multi-communal country which also suffers from severe class and urban-rural variations and which succumbs to internal war or civil war will almost invariably witness polarization



A pro-Assad rally in Damascus, March 2012.

Photo credit: Muzaffar Salman/Associated Press <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/16/world/middleeast/syria-mass-damascus-rally-for-assad.html? r=0>

between ethnic groups, economic classes, urban and rural populations and sects. The most ominous chasm in Syria is the one between sects, specifically between Sunnis and 'Alawites. The Sunni Arabs are the majority in Syria, making up somewhere in the region of 65% of the total population, but it would be erroneous to argue that they are in favor of the extremists. Yet many of them are pious conservative Sunnis and fight under the banner of local Islamist organizations. The growing presence of extremist Sunni rebel groups incorporating both local militant Islamists and foreign jihadist elements and which has been unwelcome to many of the mainstream secular and Islamist rebels has contributed to the rise in sectarian as well as *intra-rebel* tensions and violence. The extremist Islamists are not all necessarily aligned with Al Qaeda but they unequivocally call for the setting up of an Islamist state in Syria. They loathe secularism and democracy; and though some of them issue some comforting words in the direction of the minorities, the lot of the latter is unlikely to be enviable should the extremists ever achieve their goals.

The Syrian civil war dominates the headlines in the Middle East and indeed in the rest of the world yet ironically, the regional powers and international community seem incapable of taking any meaningful action to end it even though Syria's multi-layered internal conflict has allowed foreign interference. Syria, after all, is not some peripheral country of the Middle East — it is in the heart of the region. After decades of being a weak plaything of other Middle Eastern powers and a pawn of great power rivalry during the Cold War, it emerged into a regional powerhouse under Hafez al-Assad who rose to power in the early 1970s, created a relatively secular state socialist authoritarian state, fought Israel reasonably well in 1973, crushed an Islamist uprising in 1982, and gained tremendous prestige and both soft and hard power in the 1980s and 1990s. Syria developed a large secular middle class and a relatively prosperous public sector. Much of the middle class from the Sunni majority either sup-

ported Hafez al-Assad or benefited from his regime and did not favor the Islamists. The heterodox 'Alawite Muslim minority naturally supported one of their own; he gave them power, prestige, and positions in the government and particularly in the military and security/intelligence services. However, it should not be assumed that all 'Alawites benefited; many remained among the poorest of the poor. The other religious minorities naturally supported the ostensibly secular and nationalist orientations of the ruling Ba'thist regime which were seen as potent dams against the mixing of religion and politics since if that were to happen in Syria it would mean one thing: the onset of Sunni Islamist politics in the political process. Syria's power and prestige was to a great extent dependent on 'strategic rent' from the Soviet Union which provided huge amounts of military and economic aid and from the Arab states of the Persian Gulf which provided large quantities of money to maintain solvent the perennially sclerotic state capitalist Syrian economy and the resistance front against the Arabs' common enemy, Israel.

With the end of the Cold War, Soviet aid went away and with Syria's growing strategic alliance with Shiite Iran, the conservative Arab states reduced their subventions. By the time of Hafez al-Assad's death in 2000, Syria's economic situation was dire and the middle class, students and intellectuals called for political reform. His son, Bashar al-Assad, a British-trained ophthalmologist, took over with an 'eye' to reforming the system. The faith placed in him proved to be misplaced; either, he was not a genuine reformer or the structural impediments and entrenched interests including resistance from the 'Alawite elite and the public sector elite proved too much. At any rate, Syria hobbled along for another decade with Bashar al-Assad and his supporters claiming ritually that the international and regional environments were not auspicious for undertaking major changes. When the Arab Spring began in Tunisia and extended to Egypt, Syria smugly concluded that the troubles afflicting those countries



New recruits of the Free Syrian Army.

Photo credit: AFP http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/16/world/middleeast/syria-mass-damascus-rally-for-assad.html?_r=0

stemmed largely from their subordination to Western strategic and economic interests which were at variance with the popular will. Syria, on the other hand, was independent, the center of the resistance front against Israel, and as the tired cliché went: “the beating heart of Arabism.” The Syrian people, said Bashar al-Assad in a now notorious interview with a Western paper, are behind the system and the system represents them, hence there could be no so-called Arab spring in Syria. The fact that an uprising erupted in Qaddafi’s Libya, hardly a Western client, despite the growing economic interdependence, elicited little commentary from Damascus until active Western military involvement led to shrill denunciation.

When the Arab Spring came knocking on Syria’s door in March 2011, it had nothing to do with Islamists – moderate or militant; rather it was a call for reform of the system including more political freedoms, economic justice and jobs. These were secular demands and the protesters were mindful of referring to their demands as those of the entire Syrian people. The regime responded brutally. Bashar al-Assad either could not make the mental leap to understand what was happening or no doubt was influenced by the call for a harsh response issued by regime hardliners. Undoubtedly, his two strongest allies, Russia and the Islamic Republic of Iran, urged him to take a firm

stand. Furthermore, the fact that high-ranking members of the ‘Alawite community controlled the strategic points of the cohesive, well-trained and well-armed regular military and the security/intelligence services reinforced Damascus’ confidence that the matter at hand could be dealt with relatively efficiently and quickly. The problem with Assad’s hardline approach was that it led the protesters to up the ante themselves. Realizing that their peaceful demonstrations had been met with deadly force, they moved towards armed resistance. Poorly armed and ill-trained rebels – including a gaggle of initial military deserters – coalesced around the Free Syria Army (FSA) and began fighting a guerrilla-style war against the Syrian military.

The odds were overwhelmingly against them; despite the obsolescence of some of its equipment, the Syrian military is one of the most heavily-armed and one of the best-trained forces in the Middle East. It was designed to fight a conventional war against the most powerful conventional military in the Middle East, Israel, and to put down rebellions or insurgencies from within. Of course, the regime was not certain of the loyalty of many of the units, particularly of its Sunni soldiers; but while there has been a steady rate of desertions, it has not been as extensive as the rebels claim because the government has begun to rely on key elite ground units staffed largely by

loyal 'Alawites and on the air force and artillery units. The latter two branches are not likely to come into direct contact with rebel forces as do infantry and mechanized forces and thus personnel in them would have little chance to desert.

When the problems in Syria began, the government labeled the protesters as militant Islamists bent on bringing sectarian violence in Syria and undermining its national cohesion. This propaganda intensified when the opposition took to armed rebellion. This was wrong as most of the fighters are members of nationalist anti-regime groups or fighting battalions, often loosely gathered under the umbrella of the Free Syrian Army. Many, of course, are pious Muslims as well; and indeed, some have claimed to be members of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood which had ran afoul of Hafez al-Assad in the 1980s. But these fighters were not jihadists or extremists. However, the propaganda began to contain a grain of truth only at the beginning of 2012 when it became readily apparent that militant Islamists had begun to play a significant role in the armed resistance. In retrospect, it is easy to see now that it was not difficult for extremists to infiltrate into Syria.

First, the infrastructure for them was already there as they had used Syria to infiltrate into Iraq and play a role in the sanguinary anti-American insurgency in that country between 2004 and 2009. The jihadists were defeated in Iraq beginning in 2007 both by local Iraqi Islamist, tribal and nationalist insurgents fed up with their strictures and by new American counterinsurgency techniques. But they didn't all die and they didn't all exfiltrate to "greener pastures"; instead, they went to ground and emerged once in a while to engage in murderous bombing operations against the fledgling Iraqi democracy. The intensification of the violence in Syria and its eventual transformation into a civil war provided them with a heaven-sent opportunity to infiltrate into Syria and help a floundering insurgency campaign. Some of these jihadists were Iraqis who felt that they needed to return the favor and help their

Syrian brethren who had facilitated their "jihad" in Iraq; while others were Syrians and Jordanians. The jihadist group from Iraq formed the nucleus of the now notorious and combat-proven *Jabhat al-Nusra* jihadist combat group in Syria. Its full name is *Jabhat al-Nusra li 'ahl al-sham min mujahedin al-sham fi sahat al-jihad* (The Front for Aid to the People of the Levant from the Mujahidin of the Levant in the Battlefields of the Jihad). It seems to be the primary extremist or jihadist group in the Syrian civil war and the one most likely benefiting from Al Qaeda's blessings and possibly material support coming in from Iraq. It is an effective fighting force as proven by its battlefield performance; but it also has all the hallmarks of an Al Qaeda franchise or associated group: suicide bombings, car bombings, use of improvised explosive devices, and assassinations of military and security personnel. It is active in Idlib, Deir al-Zor and Aleppo.

Al-Nusra may be the most notorious and best known group, but it is not the only one on the ground in Syria. There are several more, of which the most important are two well-known active ones. *Kata'ib Ahrar al-Sham* (Ahrar al-Sham Brigades or Brigades of the Freedom of the Levant) was formed in 2011 and seems to be active in the north-west on the border with Lebanon. It seems to have a large following but significantly it denies any links with transnational outside jihadist forces. However, *al-Nusra* and *Ahrar al-Sham* seemed to have worked together under the former's command and control to take the huge Taftanaz Syrian Air Force base in mid-January 2013. The other significant group is called *Liwa Suqur al-Sham* (Falcons of the Levant Division) which came into existence in September 2011. Its leader Ahmed Abu Issa claims that his movement is a conservative Islamist one and not a militant jihadist one, though he appeared to have equivocated once when he stated that Muslims are in a parlous situation because they have lost the will to wage jihad and that he wants to see an Islamic state set up in Syria.

Suqur al-Sham is a large organization with between 600-1000 fighters divided into several battalions or *kata'ib*.

Second, for the militants Syria is a perfect place to wage jihad; this has, undoubtedly, contributed to their infiltration into the country. Unlike peripheral Yemen or the remote and forbidding Sahel, Syria is in the heart of the Middle East. It is surrounded by five neighbors, four of whom – Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq allow relatively easy access; Iraq being a particular case in point. It has a regime tailor-made for excoriation by the militant Islamists: secular, seemingly libertine, and run by a sect, the 'Alawites, who are not seen as Muslim by the militants. Moreover, Damascus is aligned with Tehran, the capital of *Ithna'ashari Shi'ism*, whom the Sunni militants also hate for being supposedly 'polytheistic.' An extremist foothold in Syria can affect the situation in volatile Jordan which many observers believe will be the first monarchy in the Arab world which will succumb to revolution. Last but not least, Syria borders the biggest enemy of all: Israel.

The jihadists in Syria – as indeed elsewhere – have a pantheon of enemies; this should have attracted the ire and “kinetic” interests of others in order to cut them down to size. This has not happened. Indeed, their robust performance in the Syrian civil war where they have fought well and bravely has raised their profile although they do not constitute more than 10-20 percent of all fighters. Moreover, despite their tendency to commit war crimes against government military personnel and possibly 'Alawites, they have generally avoided or possibly been unable so far to engage in political and social activities that would irritate the Sunnis on whose behalf they are ostensibly fighting.

The denouement of the Syrian civil war is still a ways off. Bashar al-Assad seems to have rallied somewhat: the military has not collapsed and the rebels still have not gotten their act together. In fact, there has been some serious in-fighting among the rebels. The mainstream rebels are

frustrated by the fact that the extremists seemed to have done better and by the complaints expressed by the international community that the extremists have gained too much. The mainstream rebels' response is that the dithering by the international community and its failure to provide sufficient political and military support has contributed to the extremists' hogging the lime-light. These complaints seemed to have reached the right quarters as quantity and quality of small arms reaching the mainstream rebels – particularly from across Jordan – seem to have increased.

Nonetheless, despite the regime's powers of resilience, there is a slow but steady erosion of its capabilities, legitimacy and power to rule. While the *Economist* may well be right that Syria may collapse, it is not likely that the extremists will be on the road to Damascus whereupon they would then seize power. They are not powerful enough to seize power there; too many local power groups as well as regional and international forces are arrayed against them. But just as their presence in the Syrian civil war has had a significant impact, their role in a post-Assad weakened Syria ridden by sectarian strife should not be underestimated. They will be a significant perpetuator of violence within that unfortunate country and possibly within Syria's neighbors. In short, they will wreck the road to Damascus and Damascus with it.

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Protecting Australia's Underbelly: Securing the North-West Natural Gas Region

Patrick Blannin

The 16 January 2013 attack against the Tigantourine natural gas facility near Ain Amenas, Algeria had a tremendous impact on the collective consciousness of government and private sector representatives globally. The apparent ease with which a group of non-state actors was able to infiltrate and secure such critical infrastructure has raised many questions of where possible threats may emanate and has caused an urgent audit of contemporary security practice.

Current Security Capability and Risk Assessment

Australia's north-west gas facilities are classified as vital elements of critical Infrastructure under the National Counter-Terrorism Committee's guidelines, and as such, their protection is a priority. Australia's counter-terrorism regime is founded upon a strong intelligence-led prevention and preparedness capability that includes measures based on risk management principles and capabilities that are highly adaptable in responding to terror attacks and their consequences. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and law enforcement agencies engage in ongoing intelligence and criminal investigations in order to prevent, respond to, and investigate terrorist threats and attacks in Australia.

In May 2012, a Western Australia Senate Estimates Committee was told that foreign investors felt that their 340 billion dollar (US\$330 billion) investments were under-protected. The Australian Defence Force (ADF) responded by claiming that they recognised the investors' concerns, but that their assets were positioned where the most credible threats existed and they regularly patrolled the area by air and by sea. Under the International Laws of the Sea, a 500-meter exclusion zone surrounds offshore manned and unmanned infrastructure.

The majority of Australia's critical infrastructure is owned by either private national or international companies which are, as a matter of good corporate governance, required to address the security of their assets. Companies need to accept responsibility for the development and review of risk management plans which can then be implemented by relevant jurisdictions as effectively and uniformly as possible. Although companies are required to provide adequate security of their assets, it is ultimately the responsibility of the state and its agencies to provide strategic leadership and coordination by developing a nationally consistent protection regime that will communicate relevant intelligence and information to stakeholders and to ensure the development of relevant protection capabilities that guarantee continuity of service.

In the dynamic global security environment, all forms of terrorism are considered when undertaking risk assessments. The Australian government and its agencies maintain that while a number of extremist groups are engaged in terrorism in various parts of the world, the main terrorist threat to Australian interests emanates from Al Qaeda and associated groups who regard Australia and Australians as legitimate targets.

Australia's Natural Gas Sector

The prosperity and living standards of Australians are built on a competitive advantage in energy,

including natural gas. In the current global economic downturn, Australia's manufacturing industries have suffered significant losses and as such, effective competition for its natural resources is relied upon to sustain growth. Around 46% of Australia's gas production — all sourced from offshore basins in Western Australia and the Northern Territory — is exported as Liquid Natural Gas (LNG). 92% of the world's natural gas is controlled by national governments or national oil companies, whereas Australia is the only country in the world that allows international oil companies to access and export natural gas without prioritising local supply. When combined with the fact that most of Australia's gas resources are controlled by the world's biggest oil and gas companies whose preference is to negotiate multi-billion dollar LNG contracts with a handful of overseas customers, this renders the protection of critical infrastructure an economic security issue rather than an energy security issue. However, it must be noted that, according to DomGas Alliance's 2012 domestic gas security report, natural gas fuels 23% of Australia's primary energy and 15% of its electricity generation, making natural gas a critical energy resource.

Western Australia's offshore Carnarvon and Gorgon Basins hold the majority of Australia's proven and potential natural gas reserves, which gener-

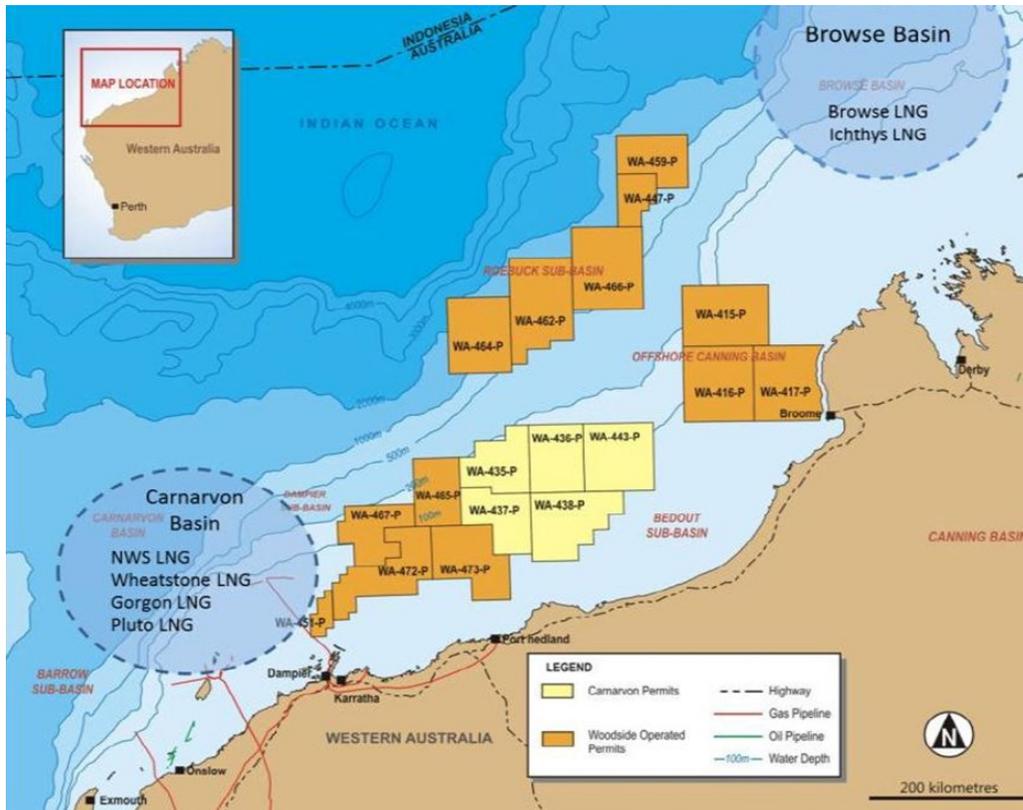
ates 99% of Australia's LNG exports as well as contributing a substantial amount of gas for domestic consumption. In August 2010, Energy Quest published statistics indicating that Australia's proven and potential natural gas reserves stood at 106 000 petajoules (PJ), with the majority located in the above-mentioned area. Export volumes from the Carnarvon Basin rose in 2009/10 by 7.4% to 874 PJ, and continue to increase with the commencement of Woodside's 4.3 million tonne per year Pluto project in 2011. Likewise the \$50 billion (US\$48.5 billion) Gorgon project is scheduled to begin operation in 2015 and produce around 15 million tonnes of LNG per year, almost equal to Australia's current total LNG production.

Some of the world largest energy companies have equity in Western Australia's Carnarvon and Gorgon Basins, including Chevron, Shell and ESSO. Thus if a terrorist organisation were to target the Carnarvon or Gorgon Basins, or indeed any other exposed energy infrastructure, it would have potentially devastating consequences for investors of current and future projects who are already feeling pressured to explore the vast potential of recently discovered East African gas deposits.



Artist's impression of the world's first floating LNG plant .

Source:
<http://www.smh.com.au/business/prelude-to-new-opportunity-20110520-1ewtz.html>



Carnarvon Basin's LNG projects.

Source:
<http://www.pnronline.com.au/article.php/113/1938>

According to an article in the Sydney Morning Herald on 31 August 2012, there is speculation that Royal Dutch Shell, BG Group of the UK and France's Total may scale back projects to build LNG export plants in Australia and invest instead in Tanzania and Mozambique, where exploration and production costs are halved. Australia's LNG industry also faces a shortage of skilled workers and has to pay higher wages in the world's fastest growing developed economy, which is compounded further by the strong Australian dollar. Shell, which plans to invest US\$30 billion in Australia over the next five years, is currently exploring opportunities in Africa, which means that a terrorist attack would disrupt, perhaps permanently, Australia's LNG boom and the potential for billions of dollars of investment.

Potential Acts and Actors

An attack on offshore infrastructure would require extensive planning and coordination. The use of explosive-laden speed boats has been an issue of concern for the United States, which has

raised the possibility of Iran using so-called "suicide boats" in the Gulf of Hormuz. A similar scenario is feasible given the relatively low cost involved, the speed at which an attack can be launched and the flexibility it offers the attacker to change targets if obstructed. Another possible method would involve terrorists attacking a facility en masse, subduing the staff and issuing a list of demands which would result in the elimination of those held captive if unmet.

The impact of both scenarios would be immediate and far-reaching on many levels. An explosion would obviously damage the facility and cause environmental damage which, depending on the scale, may require an extended period of recovery. While physical structures can be repaired, the greatest damage could be psychological, should investors be reluctant to fund reconstruction and invest in future projects. Recruiting employees may also prove difficult and existing employees could demand higher wages to work in a higher risk environment. These added costs would increase the pressure on companies to

reduce their bottom line and remain competitive given the previously mentioned potential of Eastern Africa.

Several terrorist organisations operating in the region have demonstrated their ability to target critical infrastructure, although admittedly not on the scale of the Carnarvon and Gorgon Basins:

- Communist People's Party/New People's Army (CPP/NPA) – on 3 October 2011, 200 members of the CPP/NPA attacked three mines in Surigao del Norte, Mindanao, and destroyed trucks, heavy equipment, barges, and offices. The CPP/NPA's political arm, the National Democratic Front (NDF), asserted that the attacks were aimed at mining companies that did not adequately protect the environment and workers. The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines accused the NDF of using environmental concern as an excuse to extort money from large-scale mining operations in the country.
- Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)/Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid – perhaps the most active and effective terrorist organization in Southeast Asia, with a history of carrying out operations against Australian targets, including the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings, an attempt to attack the Israeli Embassy in Canberra and the 2004 Australian Embassy attack in Jakarta.
- Al Qaeda: needs no introduction and has demonstrated its ability to plan and carry out mass casualty operations
- South and Southeast Asian pirates: Pirates operating in the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, Java Sea and the Timor Sea are not an immediate threat, but the combination of the pirates' seamanship, navigational prowess and the radical ideology of the region's various terrorist organisations represents a determined enemy with the capacity, at least in theory, to carry out operations in the Carnarvon and Gorgon Basins. An incident reported on 6 February 2013 indicates the apparent capability of regional pirates, when six individuals armed with knives in a wooden motor boat approached an anchored chemical tanker near Belawan Anchorage, Indonesia. One of them attempted to board the tanker by hooking a ladder near the mid-ship manifold area. However, an alert duty crew spotted the robbers and informed the captain who raised the alarm.
- During the first two weeks of February 2013, there were 8 cases of piracy in the Indonesian archipelago and a further 5 cases in the Bay of Bengal in which pirates boarded bulk tankers, cargo ships, crude tankers and chemical tankers. These cases highlight the fact that pirates are patrolling the region's waters and whether motivated by money or



Gas platform explosion in Azerbaijan.

Source:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/15/wikileaks-bp-azerbaijan-gulf-spill>

something less tangible, these criminals are potential vehicles for terrorist activity.

Conclusion

What the energy sector requires is stability and continuity, but in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, growth forecasts can be quickly eroded. The risks identified here are worst-case scenarios and are not exaggerated or meant to be alarmist in any way. However it is not unreasonable, given the inventive and highly adaptive nature of non-conventional threats, to explore every possibility and develop strategies to proactively address threats. Removing the threat of a terrorist attack is unfeasible in a dynamic security environment, but minimising the likelihood is possible through strong inter-agency intelligence (gathering and dissemination) cooperation, adequate asset deployment and thorough preparation. Australia's economic future in the resource export sector is reliant on its image as a secure environment in which to do business, therefore it is essential that these risks be assessed and acted upon to ensure Australia's future security and prosperity.

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GLOBAL PATHFINDER

The ICPVTR Terrorism Database – Global Pathfinder - is a one-stop repository for information on the current and emerging terrorist threats.

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.

For further inquiries regarding subscription and access to the Global Pathfinder database, please email Elena Ho Wei Ling at the following email address: isewlho@ntu.edu.sg

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis is open for contributions from researchers and practitioners in the field of terrorism research, security, and other related fields.

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

Articles can be between 1,000 to 2,000 words. Submissions must be made before the 15th of every month for editing purposes and for inclusion in the next month's edition. Please refer to the [guidelines](#).

Electronic copies of the articles (MS Word format) may be submitted to Kelvinder Singh, at the following address: iskelvinder@ntu.edu.sg

Post-Conflict Strategy in Sri Lanka: An Overview of National Reconciliation Efforts

Iromi Dharmawardhane

Following the Sri Lankan Government's military defeat of the internationally proscribed terrorist organization, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May 2009, Sri Lanka embarked on an essential and enduring twofold post-conflict strategy: (I) restorative justice for former LTTE combatants, and (II) the healing of and building "bridges of friendship" with the conflict-affected, predominantly Tamil communities living in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. This post-conflict strategy of reconciliation adopts a holistic approach, involving the government, private sector, community organizations, international organizations, NGOs, and private individuals from different segments of society in Sri Lanka.

By Many Counts a Success: The Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Former LTTE Combatants

Restorative justice for former LTTE combatants constituted the rehabilitation, reinsertion, and reintegration of 11,481 individuals of the approximately 12,000 individuals who surrendered/were detained at the end of the conflict (or have since been mandated by a court order to undergo rehabilitation). This Presidential Amnesty issued in support of restorative justice stands in opposition to retributive justice, which seeks to punish individuals for their wrongdoings through the judicial and prison systems.

Despite Sri Lanka being a nation which was terrorized in every way for three decades by the LTTE, Sri Lankans were able to identify many members of the LTTE as victims of radicalization, as Sri Lankan society has always been aware of the LTTE leadership's long-established and calculated strategy of indoctrinating false and violent ideology and propagating misinformation among the Tamil community in the North and the East (as well as the Tamil diaspora), and pursuing heartless tactics such as the abduction of children for recruitment as child soldiers. Restorative justice is thankfully also very much a part of the Sri Lankan spiritual heritage of forgiveness,

which understands that social development lies in the transformation of individuals, not in their prolonged imprisonment or death.

The Bureau of the Commissioner General of Rehabilitation (BCGR) was established at the end of the conflict to conduct the Way-Forward on Rehabilitation, Reinsertion, and Reintegration (W-RRR) programme. This programme was designed in compliance with international principles, guidelines, and best practices as well as with due consideration to the requirements of the unique Sri Lankan context. The 24 Protective Accommodation and Rehabilitation Centres (PARCs) were managed by Army personnel and staffed by 254 professional educators/school teachers from the Army Cadet Corps who directly interacted with the rehabilitees and were trained in counseling.

The Sri Lankan Government spent approximately USD 9,136,370 in rehabilitating the former LTTE combatants from January 2009 to September 2012. This cost of rehabilitation does not include the contributions in funds and other resources made by the United Nations International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UNICEF, and several Western and other governments, or the contributions made by Sri Lankan private sector organizations and NGOs. Several hundred private companies such as Brandix Lanka, John Keells,

Hayleys, Virtusa, Nestle, Lanka ORIX Finance, 99X Technology, Eswaran Brothers, Academy of Design, and Mt. Lavinia Hotels have supported rehabilitation programmes and reconciliation efforts in the North and East through large scale investments or grassroots level initiatives.

The Sri Lankan rehabilitation programme, named the “6+1 Model”, included: (1) Educational, (2) Vocational, (3) Psychosocial and Creative Therapies, (4) Social, Cultural, and Family, (5) Spiritual and Religious, (6) Recreational Rehabilitation programmes, and (+) Community Engagement.

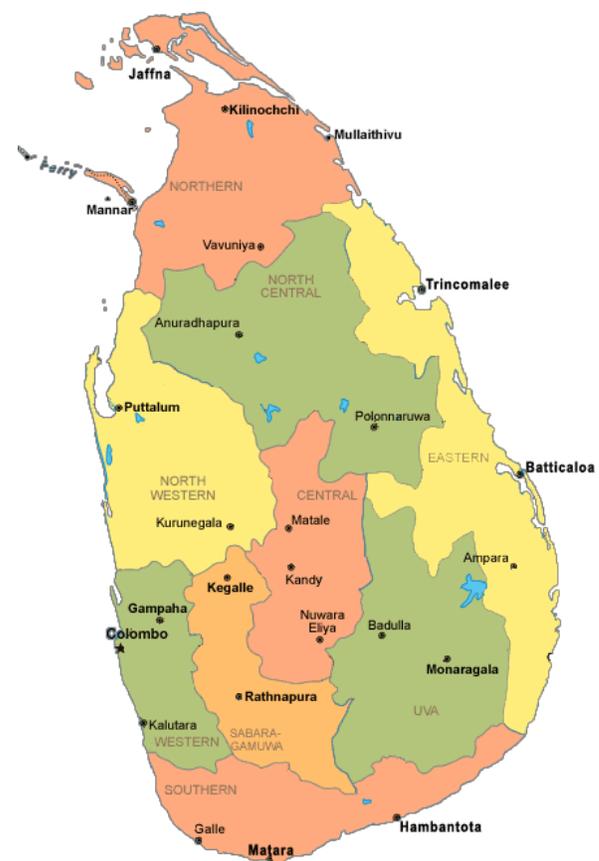
The rehabilitation programme in Sri Lanka was designed according to the rehabilitation model developed by Singapore, and then indigenized. An essential aftercare system was also in place for the rehabilitees who required livelihood support once the rehabilitation programme was completed in the form of guaranteed wage employment in the newly-established Civil Defence Force or Navy Coastguard, or support for self-employment through micro-finance facilities and business support services.

Of the 11,481 rehabilitated former combatants, 594 were child beneficiaries, and rehabilitation programmes for former LTTE child soldiers took on additional facets such as enrolment of beneficiaries into formal secondary education in the prestigious Ratmalana Hindu College and voluntary participation in Boy Scouts and Girl Guides programmes.

The effectiveness of the rehabilitation programmes in Sri Lanka was assessed using: (i) interviews with beneficiaries, (ii) reviewing of past records, (iii) observations noted by staff, and (iv) formal assessment in the form of psychometric testing. Beneficiaries were observed to have undergone a significant transformation in their attitudes and behaviour towards other ethnic groups (i.e. the Sinhalese and Muslims) as well as security forces personnel over the course of the first seven months of rehabilitation; this cognitive

transformation is attributed to the strong informal interpersonal relationships built between the beneficiaries and centre staff.

Prof. Arie W. Kruglanski and Michele J. Gelfand, psychologists from the University of Maryland conducted an independent assessment which included a baseline survey to assess the changing attitudes and opinions of the beneficiaries. Kruglanski and Gelfand found a significant decline in the levels of radicalization following the beginning of rehabilitation interventions and the way in which the staff interacted with the beneficiaries. Positive ratings were also reported by the



Sri Lanka has a long history of different ethnicities living together harmoniously; the island is known to have been multi-ethnic from its earliest recorded history.

Source: <http://tourism-vip.com/resorts/international/asia/19-sri-lanka.html>

former combatants: positive perceptions reported of the rehabilitation centre staff (96.43% of beneficiaries), the rehabilitation centre (70.14% of beneficiaries) and the rehabilitation centre guards (94.57% of beneficiaries). Of the former LTTE combatants rehabilitated and reintegrated into society, none have returned to violence or terrorism-related crimes (few have been arrested for other crimes).

Ongoing Efforts in the Healing of and Building Bridges of Friendship with the Conflict-affected Communities in the North and East

Reconciliation initiatives in healing and building “bridges of friendship” continue to be implemented to fulfill the urgent social, political, and economic needs of the conflict-affected population through: (1) resettlement and humanitarian assistance, (2) reconstruction of key transport, economic, health, and social infrastructure for reintegration, (3) political engagement, and (4) (other) multifaceted national reconciliation initiatives.

Resettlement and humanitarian assistance were provided to the more than 300,000 displaced persons by the Ministry of Resettlement, assisted by international organizations, NGOs, and private individuals. The Ministry has resettled 265,000 individuals within 2.5 years, while only 6,031 persons remained in the resettlement camps as at 8 May, 2012. The Ministry of Resettlement provided grants, cooked meals, and dry rations for six months or more after resettlement. The Army has contributed to the effort by building 1,766 houses as well as in conducting the critical demining operations in the conflict-affected regions. Demining activities continue in some areas, while demining has been completed in the Jaffna Peninsula.

The Ministry of Resettlement through government-directed policies and private investment (foreign and domestic) for development of the North and East implemented social and economic infrastructure development (and redevelopment) pro-

grammes to initiate and enable the reintegration of the conflict-affected population back into their traditional home towns and villages. These development programmes included the reconstruction of key transport infrastructure such as many roads and bridges and 250km of railroad in the North and East. The water supply and irrigation schemes and health and electricity services have been restored in most areas, and sanitation facilities have been constructed.

Reconstruction of key economic infrastructure included increased banking and finance facilities (microfinance and credit guarantee schemes) in the North and East: there were 385 private and public bank branches and extension offices in 2011. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were implemented by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka: between 2008 and 2011, 8,534 loans (Rs. 459 million) were disbursed in the Northern and 18,123 loans (Rs. 818 million) were disbursed in the Eastern Province. The traditional fishing industry has been able to rebound, as fisheries harbours were upgraded, fishing restrictions removed, and several tax and other concessions given to encourage investment in agriculture and fisheries in the North and East. Economic zones and industrial parks have been established, as well as vocational training centres and technical colleges for skills development, including development of entrepreneurship skills. The Ministry has also distributed a large number of boats, motors, and nets have been distributed to the fishing community and several thousands of cattle, goats, and poultry have been distributed to households in support of sustainable livelihoods. The “Northern Spring” programme is being implemented by the Ministry of Economic Development to develop the Northern Province in infrastructure development, agricultural and fisheries development, livelihood promotion, housing, and educational facilities.

A notable social reintegration initiative was recently undertaken by the Sri Lankan Army in the recruitment of 100 Tamil young women between the ages of 18 and 22 years in its Civil Affairs

Division. This programme helped the girls and their families to overcome the serious socio-economic issues faced by the still underdeveloped region. The recruits received a unique reconciliation-oriented military training in a friendly environment with excursions to Colombo. Some important examples of social and economic development programmes by community and charity organizations include: The North Empowerment Project of The Foundation of Goodness, serving 50,000 beneficiaries a year; Sri Lanka Unites, a multipronged youth movement for hope and reconciliation; and Happiness Centres, which conduct psychosocial programmes for school children in schools in the North and East.

Political engagement of the Tamil community and political leaders included the integration of the LTTE commander of the East, Vinayagamurthi Muralitharan (known as Karuna), a former child combatant, into mainstream politics by his appointment as the Deputy Minister of Resettlement. He joined the Sri Lankan Government as the Vice President of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). The Government has appointed an all-party Parliamentary Select Committee to develop an action plan to implement the Recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) Report submitted in November 2011.

However, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) is not willing to join the Committee, fearing its participation will be construed as agreement to possible decisions made by the Committee based on majority consensus. Presently, the Tamil political parties such as the TNA (i.e. the majority of its members) are not effectively engaging with the Government or genuinely committed to the national reconciliation process, as they are committed to values of ethnic-based sectarian parties and sympathize with the separatist ideology of the LTTE. With the LTTE systematically assassinating all prominent and popular Tamil political leaders in Sri Lanka, there is a great need for a new generation of mainstream Tamil politicians

who are willing to serve all ethnic communities and enter into national leadership roles in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka has also embarked on (other) multifaceted national reconciliation initiatives. More than one hundred events in reconciliation have been conducted and a Draft National Reconciliation Policy developed by the National Reconciliation Unit at the Office of the Adviser on Reconciliation to the President (Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha, M.P.). The Sri Lankan Reconciliation Youth Forum of the National Reconciliation Unit disseminates information and exchanges ideas, views, and suggestions on Sri Lanka's reconciliation and development process. A series of National Conferences on Reconciliation are organized by the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (under the purview of the Ministry of External Affairs) to engage the diverse sectors of society, as reconciliation cannot be achieved by the directives of the state alone.

The Kadirgamar Institute has conducted six National Conferences thus far: Inaugural National Conference on Reconciliation (24 November, 2011) and National Conferences on the Role of the Business Community (24 January, 2012), Role of Education (13 March, 2012), Role of Women (23 July, 2012), Role of ICT (18 September, 2012), and Role of Youth (2 January, 2013) in Reconciliation. Post-conference policy papers with recommendations to the Government on how to facilitate different segments of society in reconciliation efforts are also developed by the institute.

A National Programme for Developing Leadership Skills of Students from Conflict-affected in the North and East and Difficult (Rural) Areas of the South has been in operation since 2006 and is conducted by the Office of the Director of Social Development Affairs to the President,

Presidential Secretariat, as per a concept developed by President Rajapaksa. This Office has also proposed the establishment of an International Peace University in the North.

Recommendations to Address Shortcomings in the Rehabilitation and Reconciliation Programmes and the Lasting Challenge of Countering the LTTE Strategy of False Propaganda

Although the aim of this article is to provide an overview of and give due praise to the many effective state-led and other reconciliation efforts undertaken by Sri Lanka, the author is able to present a number of recommendations to the government of Sri Lanka to overcome shortcomings in the rehabilitation and reconciliation programmes as well as challenges faced by Sri Lanka, so that Sri Lanka can successfully tread its post-conflict journey.

Recommendations include: the establishment of an ongoing monitoring and mentoring mechanism for the rehabilitated former combatants, greater investment in the general population of the North and the East, empowerment of District Secretariats to implement reconciliation initiatives, restructuring of the national education system so that ethnic groups are not segregated by schools or language streams, restoring and reviving the cultural heritage of all communities (especially the Tamil community), training of government staff in Tamil and English to effectively engage with minority groups, establishing a specialized government infrastructure for national reconciliation initiatives with a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, reducing the Army presence in the North, and ensuring principles of good governance (accountability, transparency, and public participation) to regain the trust of the general population and international community.

These recommendations are in addition to or are extensions of those made in the LLRC report to address issues related to: International Humanitarian Law (IHL) relating to the final phase of the conflict, human rights, land: return and resettlement, restitution/ compensatory relief, and reconciliation.

In countering the LTTE strategy of worldwide mass dissemination of false propaganda and misinformation internationally and domestically, the Sri Lankan diplomatic arm must embrace information communication technologies (ICTs) in the conduct of public diplomacy as well as day-to-day diplomatic work by officials and institutions at home and representatives abroad for increased speed, reach, effectiveness, as well as security of information communication.

Although the LTTE is militarily defeated, LTTE ideology, second and third tier leaders and remnant factions, and financing and propaganda units survive internationally and are attempting to create unrest, revive terrorism, and hamper economic development in Sri Lanka as well as continue to radicalize Tamil youth from the more than one million Tamil diaspora living outside of Sri Lanka. The LTTE's penetration into civil society and legitimate governments in the West remain unparalleled by other terror groups. It was also the LTTE that influenced Al-Qaida in many aspects of terror, including the use of suicide bombers and the strategy of radicalization en-masse through false propaganda. There can never be less activism and more exploration into the hearts of problems, in understanding what goes on in the minds and lives of groups present in conflict-affected nations such as Sri Lanka.

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ICPVTR conducts research, training, and outreach programs aimed at reducing the threat of politically motivated violence and at mitigating its effects on the international system. The Centre seeks to integrate academic theory with practical knowledge, which is essential for a complete and comprehensive understanding of threats from politically-motivated groups.

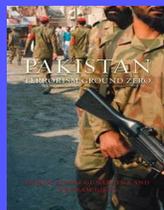
The Centre is staffed by academic specialists, religious scholars, as well as personnel from the law enforcement, military and intelligence agencies, among others. ICPVTR is culturally and linguistically diverse, comprising of functional and regional analysts as well as Muslim religious scholars from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America.

Staff Publications



*Ten Years After 9/11—
Rethinking the Jihadist
Threat*

Arabinda Acharya
(Routledge, 2013)



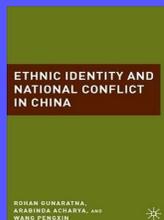
*Pakistan: Terrorism Ground
Zero*

Rohan Gunaratna and
Khurram Iqbal
(Reaktion Books, 2011)



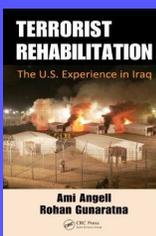
*The Terrorist Threat
from Thailand: Jihad or
Quest for Justice?*

Rohan Gunaratna and
Arabinda Acharya
(Potomac Books, 2013)



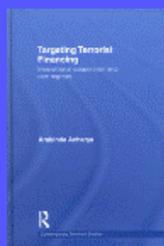
*Ethnic Identity and
National Conflict in China*

Rohan Gunaratna,
Arabinda Acharya and
Wang Pengxin
(Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)



*Terrorist Rehabilitation:
The US Experience in
Iraq*

Ami Angell and
Rohan Gunaratna
(CRC Press, 2011)



*Targeting Terrorist
Financing: International
Cooperation and New
Regimes*

Arabinda Acharya
(Routledge, 2009)