COUNTERING EXTREMISM: ISIS AND ITS AFTERLIVES

Event Report

28-29 September 2017

RSiS Nanyang Technological University | S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

NSCS NATIONAL SECURITY COORDINATION SECRETARIAT

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The workshop adheres to a variation of the Chatham House Rule. Accordingly, beyond the speakers and presenters cited, no other attributions have been included in this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome Remarks

Shashi Jayakumar began the Workshop by explaining the event's intent to explore the aftermath of the fall of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It also highlighted current trends in countering violent extremism (CVE) with a particular focus on future theatres of conflict.

Panel 1: What Next?

Mina al-Lami enumerated four post-caliphate scenarios: the "return to the desert", the "new fronts approach", the increase of home-grown attacks, and the splintering of the movement. ***Jérôme Drevon*** argued that the decline of Islamic State (IS) will reshape the jihadist social movement with increasing fragmentation and competition among factions. ***Mohamed Amin*** shared his work on "Average Mohamed" a communications initiative that turns IS ideological weapons against the group. During the succeeding discussions, there were concerns raised over how an overemphasis in counter-narrative initiatives may overlook legitimate grievances. It was also raised that current CVE strategies must adapt more quickly to confront the fast-moving changes in extremist group recruitment.

Panel 2: The West

Ryan Scrivens highlighted how Donald Trump's presidential election victory and recent terrorist attacks in the West, have led to the resurgence of right-wing extremist violence in North America. ***Amarnath Amarasingam*** uncovered the evolving motivations of IS foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) through online interviews. ***Bartolomeo Conti*** shared his research on how dialogue was an effective tool in deducing if a prisoner was radicalised. During the succeeding discussions it was stressed how governments should monitor FTFs that attempt to return to their home countries. Another key observation was how membership in right-wing groups in the West is seeing demographic shifts that require new approaches.

Panel 3: Southeast Asia

Navhat Nuraniyah discussed how developments in Marawi, the Rakhine crisis, the use of social media to establish transnational connections, and emergent role of female migrant workers impinge on the operation of pro-ISIS groups in Indonesia. ***Badrul Hisham Ismail*** discussed how the growing impact of IS coupled with the political climate in Malaysia increases the vulnerability of youth to jihadist propaganda. ***Matthew Wheeler*** argued that despite Muslim insurgents' prioritisation of independence over jihadism in Thailand's Deep South, the penetration of transnational jihadism continues to be a risk. In the ensuing discussion, it was pointed out that vulnerable individuals to extremist recruitment in Southeast Asia, such as refugees or migrant workers, should be given greater attention. There were also indications that messaging apps remain the primary communication platform for IS, in spite of increasing surveillance by law enforcement agencies.

Presentation on Rakhine

Animesh Roul presented how transnational terrorist groups can take advantage of the conditions created by the crisis in Rakhine state if the conflict does not end soon. During the Q & A, it was emphasised how international organisations must take urgent actions to cease atrocities in Rakhine state to prevent jihadist groups from gaining ground. IS could exploit the crisis by using the narrative of suffering to recruit FTFs.

Panel 4: "Other" Theatres

Ekaterina Sokirianskaia discussed how IS has become a pressing security threat in Russia and how it can be countered through the rejuvenation of existing CVE approaches. ***Elisabeth Kendall*** provided insights on how AQ remained resilient in Yemen compared to ISIS. In the Q & A session, it was stressed that in Russia and Yemen, CVE needs to move beyond government-led approaches and incorporate more civil society-led initiatives. It was also stressed that extremist organisations are able to entrench their appeal through local cultural practices.

Panel 5: Fresh Perspectives in CVE/PVE

Natalie Davis outlined diversion programmes in Australia which finds alternatives for individuals flirting with violent extremism through mentoring and employment/educational assistance. ***Fredrick Ogenga*** argued that sensationalised media coverage may exacerbate the social-psychological effects of terrorism. ***Mike Niconchuk*** explored how behavioural neuroscience could provide valuable insights into the emotional states and decision-making processes of those who join extremist networks. During the syndicate discussions, it was mentioned how working with experts from neuroscience and other emerging fields may be useful in further developing terrorism studies. There was also an emphasis on how CVE strategies should be envisioned as long-gestation undertakings. Evaluating success or failure of CVE should consider the challenges of measuring long-term outcomes.

Panel 6: South and Southeast Asia

Animesh Roul remarked on how the number of Indians linked to the Islamic State has been gradually increasing since 2014. ***Don Pathan*** expressed caution that growing sectarian tensions have caused some Thais to view the insurgency in southern Thailand as an intractable conflict. ***Mussolini Lidasan*** highlighted the work of the Al Qalam SEEDS program, which aims to address the social fault lines causing violent extremism in the Philippines. In the syndicate discussions, it was observed individuals' respect for local culture and traditional beliefs could act as a bulwark in fending off foreign extremists' influence. But while local communities have the potential to influence positive change, parochial disputes (i.e. clan and family disputes) could also exacerbate tensions in the grassroots.

Closing Panel / Moderated Discussion

The Workshop's concluding panel called for more inter-disciplinary projects involving field research, greater consensus regarding the conceptualisation of key issues, and an expansion of interest toward diverse forms of extremism.

First, some nations may have effective programmes for disengaging or even deradicalising individuals, but what works in one location may not be effective elsewhere. Related to this point is the need for governments to think beyond punishment and incarceration, particularly those who have not been directly involved in violence. Second, the aftermath of the failed IS project to seize and hold territory remains unclear. It is too early to declare the end of the physical caliphate as the harbinger for massive disillusionment among the IS ranks and leadership. The fall of Raqqa and Mosul may inadvertently be a powerful motivator as future IS propaganda may refer to the 2014-2016 period as the purported golden age of the so-called restored caliphate. Third, more attention needs to be given to the rise of other radical movements such as those on the far-right, or coming from unexpected sources like Buddhist nationalism and anarchism. Finally, scholars and policymakers looking at CVE should not feel compelled to reinvent the wheel when considering novel CVE approaches. Other fields of study may be relevant to CVE, from the experience of Disarmament, Disengagement and Reintegration (DDR) programmes in Africa to the input of psychologists for the counselling of vulnerable youth.

Welcome Remarks

Shashi Jayakumar
Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU

Shashi Jayakumar

1. Participants of the Workshop come from a variety of institutions such as universities, think tanks, government agencies, and the private sector. Their fields of expertise include, among others, country studies, social media, radicalisation, and CVE. Gathering a wide range of specialists is especially helpful in building intellectual capital and identifying solutions.

2. Attention should be both paid to the next iterations of IS as well as new forms of radicalisation, violent thought and non-IS terrorism. The defeats IS are suffering in Iraq and Syria raise key questions for the future of the group, especially the possibility for its members to focus on new geographic fronts.

3. IS could take advantage of conflict zones in Southeast Asia, considering the end of current security and humanitarian crises in Marawi, southern Philippines, and Rakhine state, western Myanmar, are not yet in sight as the Workshop is in progress. A potential overlap with the violent extremist scene in South Asia cannot be excluded.

4. The importance of monitoring violent extremism in Singapore is illustrated by the recent appearance of Abu Uqayl, a Singaporean foreign fighter, in an IS propaganda video filmed in Syria. This illustrates that Singapore is by no means immune to the threats of radicalisation, violent extremism, and terrorism.

Panel 1: What Next?

What Next for IS After Losing its Heartlands?
Mina al-Lami
Editorial Lead, Jihadist Media, BBC Monitoring [UK]

Mina al-Lami

1. The first scenario is the "return to the desert". This prospect is heavily romanticised in IS propaganda involving the establishment of a semi-clandestine state and the adoption of guerrilla tactics. It is presented as an opportunity for members of the organisation to regroup and launch armed operations.

2. The second scenario is the "new fronts approach". In that regard, the siege of Marawi was helpful in supporting the official IS narrative that the loss of territory in Iraq and Syria should not be equated with defeat. However, it remains difficult for IS propagandists to spark supporters' interest in conflict zones located outside the Middle East and North Africa regions.

3. The third scenario is the increase of home-grown attacks. The content of IS propaganda changed significantly between 2013 and 2016. It shifted from a call directed at supporters of the group to migrate to Iraq and Syria, alone or with their families, to a recommendation to launch attacks in their home countries.

4. The fourth scenario is the splintering of the movement. This scenario is all the more possible as signs of division have already emerged among IS supporters. Propaganda remains a key element for all these scenarios to materialise, as the ability of IS to continuously inspire its followers and close its ranks remains dependent on a prolific and compelling social media machine.

Islamic State and the Jihadi Social Movement after the Territorial Downfall of the Caliphate

Jérôme Drevon
Research Fellow, Oxford University [UK]

Jérôme Drevon

1. IS is primarily concerned with its survival against attacks led by countries of the anti-IS coalition on the one hand, and rival paramilitary groups on the other. The group is also struggling to maintain control over its own fighters.

2. Jihadist social movements went through three distinct phases: from the mid-1980s to 2001, multiple groups were competing with each other. Between 2001 and 2011, AQ attained hegemony. From 2011 to the present, the Arab Spring uprisings and the subsequent deterioration of security in Egypt, Libya and Syria led to IS's rise as the dominant jihadist group.

3. Jihadist groups will remain plagued by division, as illustrated by the competition for hegemony between AQ and IS. Governance has become a central feature of these groups' strategies for power, which in turn affect their organisational structure. In particular, long-term occupation of a territory requires a more inclusive approach towards the local population, not just violent coercion.

4. The ambiguous relationship between AQ and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (formerly known as its Syrian wing Jabhat al-Nusra) reflects complex and changing dynamics on the ground. The USA should avoid repeating a major mistake it made after the 9/11 attacks, when it conflated all jihadist groups with AQ. This mistake inadvertently reinforced AQ's influence and control over the jihadist social movement.

Counter Narrative in the Age of ISIS in the West
Mohamed Amin
Founding Chairman and Executive Director, Average Mohamed [USA]

Mohamed Amin

1. Average Mohamed was spurred by the need to craft a simple and attractive message that would both counter the ideology of IS and reach out to youth. This resulted in the production of a series of online cartoons. Each animated film lasts for around a minute and addresses specific themes such as Muslims living in the West, women's rights, and free speech.

2. The cartoons involve religious examples to defeat IS narratives point by point. Arguments used by the narrator and different characters are based on Islamic references such as passages from the Qu'ran as well as Hadiths or sayings of the Prophet. This mechanism relies on the use of the Socratic Method to encourage self-questioning and promote critical thinking.

3. The cornerstone of the programme that helps to explain its success is fighting violent extremism with the support of religion. An additional objective of Average Mohamed is to promote the value of democratic institutions, as they are a primary target of groups like IS.

4. Two best practices stand out. First, the need to adopt a straightforward message that speaks to all members of the audience. Second, the importance of internationalising counter-ideology by involving people from different countries. This engagement approach has proved to be an efficient tool for conveying ideas and insights that aim at dispelling IS discourse.

Syndicate Discussions

1. Strategies in countering extremist narratives online - First, search engines such as Google have been helpful by presenting users who search for IS ideologies and terms such as “jihad” and “mujahid” with alternative narratives. It would also be helpful if these materials can be translated into local languages suitable for different contexts. Second, it would be useful to simplify the language being used in these alternative narratives, to ensure efficient uptake of the messages. Third, knowing what not to say would also be helpful. For example, instead of using the term “extremism”, “intolerance” can be used.

2. Splintering within Islamic State (IS) members - There is splintering due to ideological differences within IS’ “delegated committee” into moderate and more hard-line factions. This split is telling of the instability within the IS core. For example, after the killing of top IS official Turki al-Bin’ali, some voices from the committee denied the excommunication of Muslims who do not agree with IS ideology. This splintering, however, may be good for the intelligence community as the number of IS defectors is increasing. It may also influence how ideology plays out in other areas such as Indonesia.

3. Groups such as al-Nusra and AQ seen as more “altruistic” - Social services such as da’wah classes and education, and food rations are being provided by al-Nusra and AQ for villagers and their members. This is seen as a pragmatic way to garner support for the groups, by extending sustenance and protection. This is unlike IS, who are focused on inciting fear upon the population.

4. AQ emphasises moderation as compared with IS - AQ intends to win the hearts and minds of Muslims, gradually infiltrating local tribes and communities. Hamza bin Laden’s grooming as the future AQ leader reflects its attempt to change its approach in appealing to young people.

5. The legitimisation of AQ rises as IS declines. As AQ competes with IS, AQ strives to achieve the strategic objective of being the main actor in the fight for global jihad. It espies opportunities to reassert authority and re-establish legitimacy as IS loses territorial gains.

6. Ideology should not be the primary lens in which violent extremism is studied - An overemphasis on ideology often overlooks other relevant narratives. For instance, terror groups such as Boko Haram exploit the

perceived societal injustices which West African countries have not adequately addressed. Assumptions that ideology is the main reason individuals become radicalised should be revisited. A keen understanding of the local vulnerabilities in communities or countries should also be emphasised.

7. Negotiations and discussions with terror groups are possible although there are limitations - For instance, a “peace corridor” was established in Marawi, the Philippines to allow civilians access to aid relief. Recent negotiations with terror groups in the Middle East include the exchange of IS fighters from Lebanon to Syria.

8. The Battle for Marawi was prominent in IS propaganda efforts in Southeast Asia - Discussions about the conflict in Marawi are concentrated amongst IS supporters in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Due to its geographic location, Marawi was not significantly prominent in discussions of IS supporters in the Middle East, although the IS leadership advocated for supporters in Indonesia and Malaysia to join in the fight.

9. Critical thinking skills need to be promoted - Visual props such as cartoons are effective in capturing the attention of youth in terms of alternative and counter-narratives to violent ideologies. An important aspect of critical thinking is asking questions about inter-religious diversity, and one’s own identity within plural, democratic societies.

10. Competition amongst jihadist groups weakens them strategically - Prominent jihadist groups are aware that competition amongst them weakens their global flight. However, they use this knowledge to their advantage. They are better able to plan for the future in terms of shaping priorities and recruiting strategies. For example, with the knowledge of the differences in goals and strategies, each jihadist group is better able to target specific types of individuals to recruit, and predict to some extent the behaviour of other groups. The essence of divisions is attributed more to the difficulty of sharing power and responsibility rather than a difference of ideology.

11. The future of IS magazine publications is uncertain - Changing narratives in the Rumiyah magazine need to be observed closely. A lot of messaging focuses on upholding the pledge of allegiance, an indication that there is a sense of desperation for followers to remain loyal. It seems that the quality of writing and publications is diminishing.

Distillation

1. The splintering of IS into different regions in the world (i.e. North Africa, Southeast Asia) should be further studied.

2. The growing prominence of AQ could be a major re-emergent threat as it repositions and revitalises itself to play a more active role post-IS.

3. Internal conflicts and divisions within IS due to its territorial losses could see factions breaking away and merging with other terror groups such as AQ and Jabhat al-Nusra.

4. Overemphasis on ideology in counter-narrative initiatives may overlook the legitimate grievances of individuals vulnerable to radicalisation.

5. Current CVE strategies must adapt more quickly to confront the fast-moving changes in extremist group recruitment.

6. CVE activities should be based on a nuanced understanding of extremist ideologies and the social movements that led to their emergence.

Panel 2: The West

The "Trump Effect" on Right-Wing Extremism in North America

Ryan Scrivens
Horizon Postdoctoral Fellow, Concordia University [Canada]

Ryan Scrivens

1. Right-wing extremism is on the rise in North America. There has in recent times, been a "Trump Effect". It must be noted that while he isn't the cause for these groups to exist, he has given them a platform for increased discourse and normalised much of the hate speech and divisive rhetoric expressed by these groups. The electoral victory of Donald Trump saw a flurry of targeted violent acts perpetrated by extremist right-wing groups.

2. Many of these groups are ultra-violent and unpredictable. We are seeing a growth of the far-right movement and this is seen as a response to the IS-inspired attacks in Paris, the refugee crisis in Europe and the normalisation of hate that is the Trump Effect.

3. From a broad perspective, right-wing extremism can be framed as a loose movement characterised by racially, ethnically and sexually defined white-power nationalism. It is driven by a strong perceived threat towards their country, history and heritage from non-whites, Muslims, Jews and homosexuals.

4. Right-wing extremism in North America can be divided into a few groups. The first encompasses the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), neo-Nazis and racist skin heads. The second group is made up of the Alt-Right, gurus and ideologues who envision themselves as white nationalists. The third group is made up of lone actors while the last group contains militia movements and sovereigntists.

5. The Alt-Right, gurus and ideologues focus on trying to normalise the rhetoric of hate by bringing it into the mainstream and making it more palatable to the public. They use misinformation, fake statistics and scientific studies to present the message that the whites are a superior race. Today, they have a strong focus on anti-Muslim rhetoric which they conveniently wrap up with anti-sharia law and anti-terrorist sentiment to strengthen the appeal of their message.

6. A history of normalised racism as well as the current political climate, characterised by the divisive, racialised rhetoric of President Donald Trump and media misrepresentation have contributed greatly to the success of these groups. Equally important is the lack of law enforcement response to these groups who continue to hyper-focus on the "Islamic threat" in terms of violent extremism.

7. The right-wing is alive and well and continues to flourish in an environment of social, political and economic instability, fanned by the divisive and provocative rhetoric of President Trump.

The Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: Lessons From Canada
Amarnath Amarasingam
Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Strategic Dialogue [UK]

Amarnath Amarasingam

1. Many of the foreign fighters from the West who had left for Syria and Iraq continued to maintain an online presence on various platforms and therefore remained contactable, creating an opportunity for researchers and analysts to interact with them.

2. Not all FTFs are the same. The initial waves of fighters who left for Syria and Iraq in 2011, 2012 and early 2013 were a different breed. Many of them were Syrians themselves who felt a need to protect their country and families from a brutal dictatorship, with less focus on religious doctrine. The later waves since are more ideologically pure, with a focus on establishing, protecting and expanding the so-called caliphate.

3. IS also changed the narrative of the conflict. Previously, the focus was purely on conflict and war, with women and children strongly encouraged to stay at home. The IS narrative however was strongly predicated on state-building and actively encouraged families to come and be part of the nation-building process.

4. The vast majority of Canadians have joined the conflict on behalf of IS (approximately 100) but a significant portion has also joined the conflict against IS on the side of Kurdish and other militia groups (approximately 40).

5. On the domestic front, the FTF phenomenon has had a significant impact on measures taken to battle radicalisation. One policy has been to impose peace bonds on potential foreign fighters by limiting greatly their online connectivity and presence, keeping a watch on them through GPS trackers and putting them in touch with local imams for counselling and guidance.

6. The online presence of IS fighters and supporters were initially dismissed but have emerged as a critical space in the battle against IS. Many of these individuals have found a sense of belonging and identity through the presence of an online IS community.

7. Despite social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter suspending many of these accounts, IS continues to have an active presence on both platforms as well as branching out to other newer platforms like Telegram. Telegram channels are used to broadcast information that includes details of military victories and other official releases, including digital magazines, speeches and videos.

8. Some of these fighters are hardened loyalists who are determined to fight and die for the cause with no intentions of ever returning. Others can be considered “career-jihadists” who will pursue jihads in other parts of the world if or when the fighting winds down in Syria and Iraq.

9. In the West, however, much of the policy discussion has surrounded the issue of the returnee fighter. Some of the focus is on disillusioned fighters who return and the means to rehabilitate them back into society. There is also a need to also study the returnee fighter who is disengaged but not disillusioned and therefore remains completely committed to the cause of global jihad.

10. The massive propaganda presence online will have a residual effect on future jihadist groups. Future groups will be able to access online propaganda material left behind by IS for their own propaganda purposes. The long term effects of this as well as strategies to counter this residual propaganda would also need to be considered in the future.

Dealing With Radicals in French Prisons

Bartolomeo Conti

Sociologist-Researcher, Centre D'analyse et D'intervention Sociologiques (EHESS), [France]

Bartolomeo Conti

1. After the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, the French government launched a radicalisation research programme to update the tools to understand if a person had been radicalised, and establish a programme to deal with them and start the process for eventual reintegration into society. The programme also aimed to try and help the prison officers to understand how to identify and deal with radicalised prisoners.

2. For these purposes, a month was spent interviewing guards, psychologists, and prisoners to take stock of the current conditions and dynamics that existed. The initial analysis highlighted that there was no consensus on what radicalisation meant.

3. There was also no synergy and cooperation within different sectors of the prison and hence no holistic programme to battle radicalisation. There was also no interaction or dialogue with the prisoners themselves.

4. A list of potential prisoners who would be useful for the study and the programme was drawn up and they were encouraged to participate in an engagement programme based on dialogue. Group discussions involving these prisoners, guards and other experts (including Islamic scholars) were established and a dialogue about their lives, experiences, religion and other issues was established in a free flowing manner.

5. The process was divided into three main stages. The first involved creating a group dynamic focused on de-stigmatisation of the prisoners and lowering their resistance to dialogue by giving them the confidence that they would not be judged or punished for their honest opinions. The second stage involved understanding their perception of what their lives had been with regards to religion, discrimination, and conflict. The last stage was focused on the individual prisoners, their experiences and trauma.

6. The results of this programme were focused on engagement rather than deradicalisation. The focus was getting these prisoners to understand that being a citizen did not necessarily mean conformity and that contention; protest and conflict can take place while remaining engaged with society.

7. Many of the prisoners were not very politicised or religious to begin with, but had found through radical discourse a means of engaging the rage towards society that existed within them. Many of these individuals were willing to abandon radical discourse with greater engagement and a stronger sense of belonging.

Syndicate Discussions

1. Current status of right-wing extremism in America - Right-wing extremists utilise more subtle messaging, unlike the overt display of swastikas and tattoos previously noted. They are not necessarily planning attacks; most are hyper-masculine men who yearn to identify with other men.

2. Changing certain misconceptions or biases against individuals who identify with right-wing groups - Such individuals have traditionally been

thought of as rural and less-educated. Many are in fact white-collared young working adults with zero criminal records of drug abuse or other misdemeanours. This reflects a changing shift in demographics. Individuals in such groups are predisposed to engaging in violence, which could be one of the factors for their attraction towards fringe groups such as neo-Nazis and skinheads.

3. Right-wing extremism in the USA has not gotten the attention it requires - While most of the world is preoccupied with Islamist extremism, more focus needs to be diverted towards the rise of right-wing extremism. More attention needs to be put on extremist threats that are non-Islamist in nature. An effect of this in the USA has been that Muslim and Jewish communities have come together to identify a common enemy. Such polarised divides are dangerous for any society.

4. Returning FTFs under other identities - Many FTFs fear they would be placed in prison if they try returning home. However, there have been reports of passports being forged and used by returning foreign fighters. There are also many “floating passports” - travel documents belonging to fighters who have been killed, but are in the hands of survivors. They may then enter their respective countries using fake identities. It is therefore important for INTERPOL to maintain an updated list of killed fighters in their screening systems, such that individuals travelling under these names would be suspect.

5. IS continues to exploit refugee flows - In exploiting existing suspicions of potential “sleeper” agents living within local communities, IS aims to stoke mistrust of the refugee community among local residents by inflaming tensions and suspicions against Muslims.

6. There are distinct motivational differences between individuals fighting for the Kurds and individuals fighting for IS - Certain IS fighters might be fighting for the resolution of social injustices in Iraq and Syria. Individuals who have joined to fight with the Kurds come from a wide diversity of fighters such as German biker gang members or veteran service members from the US military. Such individuals are most likely to join groups such as the Kurdish Peshmerga or the People’s Protection Units (YPG).

7. Increased incidents of fighters leaving or defecting from various terror groups in Syria and Iraq - For instance, some fighters from the Free Syrian Army (FSA) have joined other battalions in Syria. Large numbers

of IS fighters have been defecting to more “moderate” groups such as al-Nusra or have joined the flow of refugees heading towards safe havens in cities held by the Kurds.

8. Implementing prison interventions while maintaining trust with participants is of the utmost importance - an honest and frank approach while being upfront with one’s intentions and message is crucial in engagement with radicalised prisoners. The emphasis of a safe space for frank expression enables prisoners to be comfortable and increase the willingness to express their views to researchers and prison staff.

9. Prison programmes for radicalised prisoners are crucial - If these programmes are consistent and tailored for specific cultural and social contexts, positive changes in behaviour and thinking do occur in the minds of the prisoners. It is considered a success if the radicalised prisoners recognise they need help. The role of the prisons is to change attitudes and perceptions.

10. Using focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews to collect primary data - To collect rich primary data when studying extremist or radical ideas, FGDs and interviews are valuable methods. Interviewers should conduct individual sessions with interviewees to further understand the logic behind their beliefs and why they behaved or answered the way they did during FGDs.

11. Non-acceptance of Islam in plural societies reinforces Islamist rhetoric - In France, the state’s definition of secularism or laïcité is unacceptable to certain Islamist extremists, as it is viewed to be oppressive towards Islam. Also, the ideological approach towards former French colonies is problematic, in the sense that it provides further justification for using Islam as a tool for expressing rage and disappointment. The debates around Islam and Islamism are strong in France, and thus compel people to take sides.

12. Diversion tactics used by technology companies may not always be effective - IS publishes thousands of media releases online every day, and tech companies such as Google divert much of the content. However, people who are looking for radical or extremist content know where to look and find content. The problem is one of “residual propaganda”, as old content remains in the online space.

Distillation

1. Extremist and radical groups also grapple with identity issues. This could be a potential avenue for CVE initiatives.

2. Countries should monitor how FTFs attempt to return to their home countries. One potential conduit for the surge of IS defectors is blending in with refugee inflow.

3. Membership in right-wing groups in the West is seeing demographic shifts that require new approaches by law enforcers.

4. Dialogue between and within politicised groups could reduce societal divisions.

5. Deradicalisation programmes should focus on the humanitarian, non-militant aspects of Islam and promote assimilation into society.

Panel 3: Southeast Asia

Indonesia's Pro-ISIS Groups: from Raqqah to Marawi, the Virtual Caliphate is Alive and Well

Navhat Nuraniyah
Analyst, Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict [Indonesia]

Navhat Nuraniyah

1. There are three main groups supporting IS in Indonesia: (a) Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) - Katibah Indonesia; (b) Bahrun Naim who has strong online presence and who does not lead a group; and (c) Katibah Nusantara, which congregates Indonesian and Malay speaking fighters and forms the Malay speaking unit of IS.

2. While pro-IS groups in Indonesia may have some differences, they are all connected to Mahmud Ahmad. Ahmad is the person charged with recruiting fighters from Southeast Asia to fight in the Battle for Marawi.

3. Developments in Marawi may lead rival pro-IS groups to collaborate. The Rakhine crisis may also lead to higher interaction between extremists and trigger further conflicts. At the height of the fighting, Marawi served as an ideological propaganda ground to sustain IS support while it is losing ground in Syria.

4. Recapturing Marawi would not terminate the problem as Mindanao may accommodate extremists and as there are discussions on exploring Maguindanao and Basilan as potential training grounds of the future.

5. Social media facilitates the transnational connection of jihadists. Content analysis and a two year-long monitoring of Telegram and private chat groups revealed the emergent trend of radical, mostly female, migrant

workers in Hong Kong supporting jihadists. Their involvements include fundraising for IS, arrangement of migration routes, and serving as accomplices to bombings.

6. There are several scenarios for Indonesian FTFs in Syria and Iraq. Unlike those who fought in Afghanistan, they may remain in Syria and Iraq until they die. Some may transfer to other combat zones such as Marawi. Other FTFs may come home and break their connections with IS, disappointed with their experience in the Middle East. A small number may return to re-activate local networks.

Malaysia, With or Without IS
Badrul Hisham Ismail
Programme Director, IMAN Research [Malaysia]

Badrul Hisham Ismail

1. Since 2014, there is an estimated number of 300 Malaysian FTFs in Syria, of which 90 have returned. Domestically, there had been 1,472 security violation-related arrests.

2. There is a reported surge in religiosity. According to surveys, the majority of Malay Muslims identify themselves as Muslim first. There is also rising support for hudud law and a degree of sympathy for the IS agenda.

3. Research conducted by IMAN on Malay Muslim youth revealed that they feel a “lack of empowerment”. Moreover, the respondents consider themselves as “cynical about politics”. They also perceived perceive Malay identity to be negative, especially among those living outside of urban areas. These perceptions are attributed to Malaysia’s race-based politics, “social engineering” of the Malay Muslim identity, and the strong grip of religious authorities over religion, especially Islam.

4. The influence of IS narratives in Malaysia is enabled by the infiltration of IS discourse in the public sphere, specifically the open discussion of extremist activities. Other non-IS but likewise extremist groups can also exploit this permissive environment.

Jihadism in Southernmost Thailand: A Phantom Menace?
Matthew Wheeler
Senior Analyst, South East Asia, International Crisis Group

Matthew Wheeler

1. The Deep South of Thailand is home to a lingering ethnic conflict driven primarily by the desire to achieve independence by from the Buddhist majority in the country Muslims. While the prolonged insurgency may pose a radicalisation risk, there is no confirmed information of Thai citizens joining IS or AQ.

2. Insurgency in the Deep South did not evolve into a jihadist movement for multiple reasons. First, there is no overt state religious intervention as the Thai constitution respects freedom of religion, nor are there obvious hurdles to practicing Islam. Second, militant organisations in the Deep South hold different ideologies compared to transnational jihadists such as IS prioritising secession.

3. Thus, groups in the Deep South are wary of associating themselves with IS or any other jihadist movement could and embracing transnational jihadist tactics would be costly. Extreme violence could jeopardise their secessionist cause's international legitimacy. It could also trigger international counterterrorism intervention. More importantly a turn to greater violence could lead to the loss of popular support among the local population.

4. There are however conditions that may lead to the rise of jihadist extremism in the Deep South. The new generation of militants may become disillusioned with the strategy of the older leaders. This could result in the radicalisation of individuals or small cells, towards supporting IS.

Syndicate Discussions

1. Addressing the radicalisation of Indonesian migrant workers - Female migrant workers are often subject to exploitation by their employers. Thus, they are especially vulnerable to jihadists who exploit these grievances and promise workers a sense of belonging, empowerment, and solidarity. Therefore, there is a need to address their disenfranchisement by introducing programmes such as peer mentoring and social activities in controlled and safe settings.

2. The "Arabisation" of Malays as an indicator of increased conservatism or radicalisation? - There is concern within Malaysia and some of its neighbours that "Arabisation" may be an indicator of increased conservatism or radicalisation, especially with the increasing number of students going to Middle Eastern countries to study. Concerns regarding "Arabisation" and the potential for increased radicalisation might have also been influenced by the increased Wahhabi presence within the country. This is, however, an exaggeration as there has always been some form of "Arabisation" for as long as Islam existed in Malaysia.

3. Material and economic comfort might not fulfil young people. While most young individuals in Malaysia live in relative comfort, they may still not feel satisfied with their economic and professional opportunities. This could be one of the reasons why the ideology of IS can find a foothold among individuals. Possible strategies to win back the hearts of young Muslim Malaysians include rethinking the social contract between the government and its citizens to reduce the animosity which exists in ethnic and religious groups, by placing less reliance on identity politics and a greater focus on socio-economic and political reforms.

4. A number of Malaysians identify ethnically rather than through their nationality - Unlike the Indonesian national philosophy of Pancasila, there is a distinct lack of national identity in Malaysia. The idea of being Malay in Malaysia tends to connote perceptions of being "backward" or "bad".

5. A sense of national identity in Malaysia is weak - Race-based politics in Malaysia are a major obstacle for social cohesion. These expressions of identity politics are harmful to racial and religious relations, especially as the government is more inclined to protect the rights of certain groups over others. The government's stance of prioritising religion over race has contributed to radicalisation in the country.

6. IS will gradually shift towards other platforms if Telegram becomes unsustainable for encrypted communication - Telegram is at risk from infiltration and surveillance by law enforcement agencies and researchers. However, "secret chat" functions and their equivalents in other apps remain out of reach for law enforcers.

7. Concerns over displaced Indonesian families who have left for Iraq and Syria returning to Indonesia - Families who return are usually disillusioned with IS and often seek assistance from the Kurds, international journalists and non-jihadist groups for passage back to Indonesia. These individuals, however, do not represent the majority of Indonesian fighters as most have opted to remain in Iraq and Syria.

8. The plight of the Rohingya will be of increasing interest to terror groups - Exploiting the vulnerabilities of the Rohingya by AQ and IS could be a new avenue for terror groups, although there are currently no channels for extremists as yet to facilitate communication with the Rohingya refugees. The growing concern for the Rohingya could lead to increased political pressure on South East Asian countries (especially Malaysia and Indonesia) to provide further assistance in relief efforts for displaced Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

9. There is a low risk of radicalisation for individuals residing in Thailand's Deep South – At present, there have been no instances of Thai nationals who have joined IS. There are reports of some operatives in Thailand involved in the thriving black market to purchase firearms or fraudulent documents. An attack by IS in Thailand is deemed unlikely. On the whole, Telegram channels in Thailand do not contain much content about IS.

10. The insurgency in Thailand's Deep South is a largely localised phenomenon - The threat of the insurgency turning into a transnational one is slim, as their struggle is for secession.

11. Groups exploit close transnational terrorist links between the Philippines and Malaysia - The capture of some Abu Sayyaf operatives in Kuala

Lumpur is significant, but it will not make a big difference to the threat in the Philippines. However, the border between Philippines and Malaysia remains porous. In addition, Malaysians returning from Marawi are a huge security concern.

12. Prison radicalisation in Indonesia is a growing problem - The administration of prisons in Indonesia is problematic as the whole prison system is managed by three different agencies, rather than one overarching entity. Furthermore, overcrowding and corruption in prisons contributes to individuals getting exposed to extremist ideologies. However, there are efforts to prevent radicalisation in prisons, and it has been argued that the activities of radicalised prisoners are purposely permitted in prisons for intelligence gathering purposes.

Distillation

1. Different national contexts must be considered when studying radicalisation.

2. Vulnerable individuals to extremist recruitment such as refugees or migrant workers should be given greater attention.

3. Messaging app Telegram remains the primary communication platform for IS, in spite of increasing surveillance by law enforcement agencies.

4. Authorities should continue monitoring the degree of jihadist content on online communications even if there is a low risk of radicalisation in southern Thailand.

5. Social and political conditions in Malaysia are ripe for further radicalisation to take place.

Presentation on Rakhine

Animesh Roul
Executive Director, Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict [India]

Animesh Roul & Shashi Jayakumar

1. While Myanmar does not recognize Rohingya (Bengali) Muslims as an ethnic group, Bangladesh regards them as "illegal immigrants from Myanmar".

2. The crisis in Rakhine state exacerbates Islamic insurgency and violence in the region. Current clashes can be considered as a continuation of the communal clashes from 2012-2013 between Rakhine Buddhists and Muslims.

3. Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (also known as ARSA, called Aqa-Mul Mujahidin by Myanmar, and formerly named Harakah al-Yaqin (Faith Movement) emerged during the 2012-2013 clashes. Although Myanmar's media reported about ARSA in 2013, international media only began paying attention to the group after its coordinated attacks in August 2017.

4. The plight of Rohingya is serving as a recruitment tool for militant groups. Also, transnational jihadist groups such as IS have also called on its supporters to fight for Muslims in Myanmar. The crisis will continue to be exploited by transnational terrorist groups if international organisations do not take measures to terminate the conflict.

Q & A Session

1. AQ's exploitation of Rakhine state crisis - AQ is currently using the crisis as a means for propaganda and it is on the hunt for opportunities to further take advantage.

2. Indian government's stand on the possible deportation of Rohingya refugees - When the Rakhine state crisis gained momentum, Indian government of the time allowed for the influx of refugees. The current government is attempting to depict the refugee situation as a security threat. Refugees who are already in India would not be deported, but a further intake will cease.

3. Bangladeshi authorities' approach to Rohingya refugees - Radicalisation of Rohingya refugees is a big concern for Bangladeshi authorities. They are regulating refugee camps and have halted the operations of some Islamic charities ostensibly to prevent IS infiltration or any other transnational jihadist group.

4. Actions taken by the international organisations' on Rohingya crisis – Actions taken by international organisations are focused on the criminal aspects of the Rakhine crisis. Addressing radicalisation is not a priority as organisations such as the United Nations (UN) are preoccupied with initiatives to stop human trafficking, counter-narcotics, and small arms proliferation.

Distillation

1. International organisations must take urgent actions to cease atrocities in Rakhine state to prevent jihadist groups from forging alliances.

2. IS could exploit the Rakhine crisis by using the narrative of suffering to recruit FTFs and to bolster its propaganda.

Panel 4: "Other" Theatres

ISIS and Russia
Ekaterina Sokirianskaia
Founder and Director, Conflict Analysis and Prevention Centre [Russia]

Ekaterina Sokirianskaia

1. IS represents a serious security threat to the Russian Federation. As of March 2016, more than 3000 Russian citizens had joined the group. The organisation has claimed responsibility for at least 14 attacks across the country. Russian and Russian-speaking IS fighters were reportedly involved in attacks in Turkey (2016), the Philippines (2017), and Iraq (2017).

2. In 2015, the remnants of North Caucasus insurgents fighting under the umbrella of the AQ-associated Caucasus Emirate also swore allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed caliph of IS.

3. Children who returned from IS-held territories have become a pressing security concern after the liberation of Mosul, which was the focal point of a nest of Russian-speaking jihadists. Around 400 Russian children had been identified as residents of IS-controlled areas. Since August 2017, 13 of the children have returned from another IS-held city in Syria, Raqqa.

4. The Russian government has attempted to deal with the challenges posed by IS by supplementing "hard" approaches such as military and police raids, with CVE programmes. Regional governments in the three North Caucasus republics of Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia have implemented exit programs for former fighters who wish

to reintegrate back into the society. The exit programs were initially set up to tackle radicalisation into jihadism, but were recently expanded to include efforts to integrate those who came back from Syria.

5. A highly organised and bureaucratised CVE system has also been created at various ministerial levels by the Russian government. A two-fold approach to CVE is adopted. The first includes maintenance of control over religious affairs, monitoring social media content, financial flows, and circulation of extremist literature. In Dagestan, a Russian republic which had posed severe security challenges to Russia, most Salafi mosques were closed down in the last two years. A preventive registry of extremists, with 15,000 people on the list, has also been created. The prevention measures adopted have yet to fully address the challenges of radicalisation in the country.

6. Secondly, CVE in Russia implements ideological counter narratives. The promotion of a tolerant form of Islam that incorporated strong ethnic traditions was promoted. In the three states of Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia, for example, the Sufi form of Islam was emphasised. Carried out by the Spiritual Policy Board of Muslims, a semi-government institution received state funding, the initiatives aim to reach out to mosques and disseminate religious-based propaganda campaign on the media and internet.

7. While successful in controlling religious affairs, literature and information appear successful on the macro level, these efforts fail to engage vulnerable youths on the individual level. Civil society engagement in CVE was also embryonic, while engagement with families is non-existent.

8. In short, CVE initiatives in Russia have been criticised for lacking creativity due to an over reliance on government officials and religious leaders. There is a need for lessons from international best practices in CVE to incorporate initiatives from alternative counter-messaging organisations, civic and civil society actors.

Al Qa'ida in Yemen

Elisabeth Kendall

Senior Research Fellow in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Oxford University (Pembroke College) [UK]

Elisabeth Kendall

1. AQ has proven resilient in Yemen compared to IS due to its ability to retain local support from the population. Seven core areas defined the appeal of AQ in the Yemeni context: tribal ties, community development, local branding, exploiting the current conflict, youth engagement, positive positioning, and communication methods.

2. AQ is able to govern parts of Yemen competently in conjunction with existing local structures and councils. It promotes the areas it controls as havens of stability in a war-torn Yemen.

3. The organisation distinguished itself from IS and the Saudi-led military coalition, which AQ in Yemen portrayed negatively. AQ distanced itself from the IS tendency of indiscriminately killing women and children. It also apologised for mistakes in the battlefield such as when it bombed hospitals in 2016. In such scenario, AQ compensated tribes whose members were killed with money.

4. AQ is also adept at communicating its message wrapped in local cultural references. As an example, one in every five pages of its Inspire magazine contained poetry, a medium that is memorable for the Yemeni tribal communities.

5. Poetry produced by AQ is relatively cheap to create. As it is part of the local literary landscape, jihadist poetry proves resilient against attempts at taking down digital content. Instead, the narratives embedded in such poetry become part of the collective memory of its readers.

6. Another way for AQ to entrench themselves is via youth engagement. The extremists are able to fuse current issues besetting youth with the jihadist ideological agenda. Notable examples are art competitions sponsored by AQ bestow prizes on youths who make the best artwork denouncing drone strikes.

7. In future, AQ and IS are more likely to cooperate in Yemen. Reports indicate that the two groups are already working together in central and southern Yemen.

8. Counterterrorism practitioners need to go beyond the violent activities of groups like AQ in Yemen. Instead, there should be greater awareness on finding out how these groups are able to entrench their appeal in a given population.

Q & A Session

1. Financing AQ activities through illicit oil trade - Each tribe in eastern Yemen had its own oil ship to illicitly bring in petroleum products. Arrangements were made by tribes for AQ to bring in shipments in exchange for cash. AQ for its part contacted tribes in the al-Marrah region and asked if they could change USD 25 million into local currency. In another instance, a local oil company was asked to drain its bank accounts and send the money through the exchange so that AQ could use it for its “charitable” works and its community development projects.

2. Whether foreign fighters are joining AQ in Yemen - Foreigners have begun to join AQ. Since August 2017, there have been anecdotal accounts of North African FTFs (Algerians, Tunisians, and Libyans) driving around the countryside on SUVs.

3. Limited reach of AQ propaganda - While AQ is still prolific in terms of producing its own propaganda, it has been less proficient in reaching out to Western audiences and potential FTFs. Thus, AQ propaganda has shorter reach than comparable IS propaganda.

4. IS show of force in Yemen limited to online platforms - On the contrary, IS has been overly reliant on its massive social media campaign versus its real presence on the ground. There are no more than a core cadre of 75 Yemeni IS fighters. They were originally 200-strong but more than half had defected to AQ. This highlights the limited influence of IS in Yemen.

5. Destination(s) of choice for Russian returnee fighters - Given a choice, defectors prefer not to return to Russia due to the long prison sentences awaiting them. Presently, Turkey and Ukraine are the most popular destinations for those leaving Syria and Iraq. There is a large Russian Muslim community in Istanbul. This diaspora coalesced after a security crackdown in the North Caucasus prior to the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

6. Hierarchy among Russian FTFs - Among Russian foreign fighters, Chechens and Dagestanis are the most popular and have a reputation for proficiency in combat skills. Chechens are highly motivated to fight Vladimir Putin's regime. In reality, however, most Chechens are young and lack prior battle experience. Their reputation nonetheless guarantees a quicker rise into leadership roles.

7. Misattribution of attacks to IS - IS is not the only organisation that claims responsibility for attacks it did not conduct. For example an AQ-associated cell claimed credit for a recent attack against a Saint Petersburg metro station. It is also unclear to the Russian government who is behind the recent spate of "telephone terrorism", where bomb threats were delivered over the phone. In Yemen, some attacks have been falsely attributed to IS. Further investigation suggested these attacks were most likely linked to the former Yemeni president and his Republican Guard.

8. Reasons for a weakened insurgency in Russia - The Russian FSB has learned to prevent insurgent activities, especially in major cities. They have infiltrated extremist groups and built informant networks over the years. The Russian government has allocated substantial funding for its security services and established new agencies. Thus, while Chechens pose a latent threat, they are not a priority for now.

9. Mapping the smuggling routes in Yemen - Yemen has 2000 kilometres of coastline, of which around half is rife with illegal activities such as arms and oil smuggling. Interviews with communities along the coast revealed that in one case, nearly 5000 weapons were smuggled in from conflict areas such as Somalia. In some areas, the volume of smuggling has caused traffic jams on desert routes to the north.

Distillation

1. CVE needs to move beyond government-led approaches to incorporate more civil society initiatives.

2. More attention should be paid to how radical organisations are able to entrench their appeal through local cultural practices, and providing the semblance of governance.

3. The long-term impact on children of living in IS-controlled territories must be studied.

Panel 5: Fresh Perspectives in CVE/PVE

Countering Violent Extremism through Non-Traditional Law Enforcement Methods: Is There a Better Way than Arrest?

Natalie Davis
Operational Psychologist, Australian Federal Police

Natalie Davis

1. Australia has witnessed a surge of violent extremism-related activity in recent years. Since September 2014, 74 people have been charged in relation to 31 counterterrorism operations. The nation has witnessed five terrorist attacks and 13 more were foiled by police. At present there are 45 people before the courts facing terrorism charges, including six juveniles aged 14-16. Roughly 220 Australians are believed to have travelled to join jihadi groups in Iraq and Syria. Between 65 and 82 have died and 110 are thought to be currently involved in the conflicts.

2. There are three layers of terrorism prevention in Australia: Broad initiatives aimed at social cohesion encourage cultural integration and school participation. Next, CVE programmes attempt to steer individuals deemed to have concerning views onto more positive pathways. Finally, the bottom net is the operational space involving security service investigations, and teams dealing with returning foreign fighters and imprisoned extremists.

3. In August 2014, the National Disruption Group (NDG) was established in Australia, bringing together 20 government agencies to counter extremism and radicalisation. Key to the CVE strategy is the NDG's Diversion Team, which is a police-led directive that finds alternatives to prosecution for individuals who have displayed signs of radicalisation but

have not crossed the line to warrant an investigation. The team is police-led but mental health practitioners, employment agencies and community services are involved with assistance programmes.

4. Referrals to the Diversion Team may come from members of the public through the national security hotline, the education system or from Joint Counterterrorism Teams, which comprise federal and state law enforcement and the domestic intelligence agency (ASIO) who may identify likely candidates on the peripheries of ongoing investigations.

5. The primary goal is not deradicalisation, which is considered to be a longer-term and gradual process of personal evolution. Preventing violence is the priority. Individuals involved in Diversion programmes may hold convictions regarding sharia law and the khilafa but must understand that violence is by no means acceptable.

6. Interventions do not include substantial religious mentoring, as the Diversion Team believes the predominantly young people involved are often not well versed on ideology, but have histories of trauma, family dysfunction and domestic violence. Instead programmes draw upon a combination of mentoring, coaching, and sustained assistance with employment and academic attainment. Coordinators work with the families of programme participants as much as possible.

7. The reintegration of returning foreign fighters is currently a focal point for diversion efforts. Far-right extremists are also increasingly involved. Groups such as the Antipodean Resistance are becoming more active and members of such organisations often have more deeply entrenched views than individuals ensnared within jihadism.

8. Challenges for the future of Diversion in Australia include the difficulty of measuring success, because evaluations would essentially be attempting to prove a negative; incentivising participation as programmes are purely voluntary; and formulating strategies for dealing with children returning from Syria.

Media, Terrorism and Youth Deradicalisation in Kenya

Fredrick Ogenga

Director, Center for Media, Democracy, Peace and Security, Rongo University [Kenya]

Fredrick Ogenga

1. Kenya has a history of violence attributed to jihadi organisations. In 1998, over 200 people were killed in the United States Embassy compound in Nairobi following the detonation of a large truck bomb. Three suicide bombers killed themselves and 12 others at a Jewish hotel in Mombasa in 2002, while more recently the Somali-based group al-Shabaab has staged operations in Kenya including assaults on a shopping mall and university which killed and injured several hundred people.

2. Initially researchers believed the violence was purely motivated by religious interpretation but in recent years observers have concluded that religion is often used as a smokescreen for personal material gain and the attainment of power. In 2011, Kenya launched Operation Linda Nchi in Somalia to attempt to stabilise the situation and avoid spill-over, but the military has since become bogged down without a clear exit strategy.

3. A contemporary evolution in Kenya is the increasing involvement of women in violent extremist networks. Kenyan women are now marrying al-Shabaab militants and assisting with smuggling operations over the border into Somalia. Typically between 18 and 24, the women involved are often middle-class, relatively well-educated and most are lured through social media or through friends.

4. Researchers from Kenya and the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. consulted with media outlets to develop more constructive approaches to the reporting of violent extremism, particularly regarding stories about the involvement of women. The team believes sensationalist media reports may contribute to the allure of extremist networks and urges journalists and editors to focus more on themes such as collective belonging and resilience in the stories they publish or broadcast.

5. However, as media companies are primarily concerned with engaging their audiences and securing revenue, the initiative is looking upstream by targeting aspiring media professionals. A curriculum has been established for a master's degree in Media, Democracy, Peace and Security at Rongo University, which draws upon three prominent African philosophies to promote what is termed Hybrid Peace Journalism.

6. Beyond the media, civil society organisations also play a crucial role in preventing radicalisation and violence in Kenya. A group called Sisters without Borders work alongside mothers whose sons and daughters have been recruited by violent extremist groups. Mothers can be the greatest source of information about what is going on their children's lives and are well placed to form a chain of resistance within their communities.

7. The aftermath of 9/11 has mostly promoted an adversarial strategy of kinetic operations and military intervention. Kenya has applied this strategy and found it lacking. More preventive approaches and creative solutions are required.

Radical Minds: Leveraging Behavioural Science for Better P/CVE Policy in MENA

Mike Niconchuk
Senior Researcher, Beyond Conflict [USA]

Mike Niconchuk

1. There are countless ways that someone becomes involved with violent extremist groups, yet ideologues, die-hard fighters, followers and leaders are all too often lumped together in linear theories of radicalisation. It is essential to move beyond the ideological question and examine the fundamental ways in which people make decisions in order to design more effective prevention and reintegration programmes.

2. The psychological factors that lead people to join extremist groups in Jordan include the influence of friends and broader social networks, perceptions of relative deprivation, and a lack of agency and social mobility. For many, the notion of the caliphate was an antidote to these concerns. It represented a tight-knit community which addressed injustice and offered a clear opportunity for merit-based advancement.

3. To understand pathways to violence a basic understanding of cognitive processes is required. The brain has certain core mechanisms which allow us to avoid internally deliberating every decision we have to make. We have found quick and clear patterns to help us navigate the world in efficient ways. Beyond the primary functions of survival and perception, prominent sub-conscious processes focus on safety, security and control, the need to belong, the need for autonomy, and the need for purpose and meaning.

4. The instinct for survival is turned on high when one feels under threat, or in chaotic situations where there is an impending lack of control; when

an individual feels their sense of belonging is disintegrating, and when they feel they may be isolated, excluded or under chronic stress.

5. When the brain consolidates more around survival functions we lose much our capacity for interpersonal empathy, we have a noticeable reduction in our ability to control our impulses, we have a reduction in our ability to think critically, we have a heightened sensitivity to threats, and we have a stronger need to belong. All the mind needs is a present perception of threat for these processes to be activated.

6. IS has been very effective at catering to such natural impulses and needs, while PVE/CVE practitioners often fall short. Intervention programmes must be cognisant of what can and cannot be changed with a given intervention. There are certain fixed inputs that must be understood and accounted for, even if we cannot necessarily change them. Then there are some more flexible inputs which can be manipulated through tailored programme design.

7. Practitioners cannot change what is going on in an individual's personal circumstances and cannot change their personal psychology. What can be changed are their social networks, how they interact with others, and the ways in which they air their grievances.

8. Psychological factors can be included into early mapping through tablet or mobile-based applications to assess dynamics like the need to belong. Youth in three communities in Jordan were assessed regarding their sense of belonging with family, friends and their communities. Findings showed a direct correlation between young people's sense of belonging and their sense of empowerment. Mapping shows where these dynamics play out, meaning programmes can be more effectively targeted.

9. When the unique psychological factors of a community make sense in geography you can try to isolate what is going on in those places and then go back and see what is happening upstream in this specific place that makes such tools highly relevant.

Syndicate Discussions

1. Face-to-face engagement is more effective - Australian law enforcement officers do not use online platforms such as Twitter as part of their engagement strategies to counter radicalisation. The authorities engage

individuals face-to-face as long as the individual in within Australian territories. For suspect Australians who are overseas and have indicated they would like to return, authorities will engage with the lawyer liaising directly with the individual instead. Initial contact with the individual, however, may be online.

2. Disengagement strategies are considerably easier than deradicalisation efforts - In Australia, individuals can hold on to the extremist beliefs as long as they refrain from or are unlikely to participate in violent activities. The mandate belongs to the local state CVE coordinator in Australia who works with a panel of various stakeholders (e.g. educational and social services department) to develop an array of indicators and assessment tools to identify potential vulnerabilities, and monitor individuals who promote extreme ideologies but are non-violent.

3. Most returnees are women and children - Many women and children return back to their respective countries, as most had not headed to Syria by choice since they were forced to follow their husbands to join the cause. Others returned as widows after their husbands were killed. Basic counselling services should be offered to these women and children, but there should be continued surveillance in case the women returned to carry out domestic attacks instead.

4. Terror groups in Africa such as Boko Haram have focused outreach efforts on women – Recruited women are generally well-educated university graduates. A sense of disillusionment could have possibly played a part in the radicalisation process, by promising a safe haven in religion.

5. Approaches within neuroscience have the potential to contribute new insights towards understanding violent extremism - Data from human biological samples, for instance, could help understand the normalisation of cortisol levels and other stress hormones in individuals. Approaches such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) can assist in reducing violence amongst individuals. For instance, CBT application in Chicago amongst young gang members saw a reduction in levels of violence.

6. Extremists are not always from the “out-groups” of society - The in-group/out-group characterisation of radicalised beings is problematic, as individuals rely on relationships within their social networks for information and support. Indicators of radicalisation need to be nuanced, as there are often no markers of isolation. Just because an individual

feels isolated, it does not mean that he becomes radicalised entirely on his own.

7. Women are increasingly participating in violent movements - Women often tend to suffer the most in violent conflict, as patriarchal societies have a “culture of exclusion” whereby women are expected to take a backseat. However, in places such as Kenya, women of Somali descent have joined the frontlines, breaking gender stereotypes. In terms of countering these different forms of extremism, it is important to note that CVE strategies cannot be replicated in every society. Violence has to be contextualised.

8. Universities are sites for terrorist recruitment - Youth radicalisation is a rapidly growing threat in parts of Africa, as terrorist recruiters target their weaknesses and sensibilities. The Garissa University attack in Kenya in 2015 was an example of how universities can be both sites for recruitment and sites for counter movements. For example, student groups have become more active in trying to counter extremism.

9. Violent and non-violent extremists have to be treated differently – From a legal standpoint, not much can be done to punish non-violent extremists because they may not have threatened to use violence. It should be the prerogative of communities and civil society actors to counter non-violent extremism and prevent it from turning violent.

Distillation

1. Monitoring and studying the various counselling or rehabilitative efforts different countries adopt may be helpful.

2. Working with experts from neuroscience and other emerging fields may be useful in further developing terrorism studies.

3. CVE and programmes should also be suited to the needs, culture, and context of a society.

4. CVE strategies should be envisioned as long-gestation undertakings. Evaluating success or failure of CVE should consider the challenges of measuring long-term outcomes.

Panel 6: South and Southeast Asia

India and the Enduring Threat of Islamic State

Animesh Roul
Executive Director, Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict [India]

Animesh Roul

1. Though India has a sizeable Muslim population, the Indian government is not taking any concrete steps to curb recruitment and indoctrination of Indian Muslims into extremist groups. This remains a critical concern because IS continues to use available means to reach out to this population with its propaganda.

2. IS is particularly targeting the young Muslim population, attracting them with its ideology. The Student Islamic Movement of India is an example outcome of such recruitment efforts. To date, close to 140 Indian nationals have joined the Islamic State and more than 95 IS sympathisers have been arrested or detained by the Indian security services.

3. Easy accessibility and a significant increase in the amount of online propaganda material, physical distribution of propaganda material at mosques and Islamic centres, and interactions through closed groups to attract more young people to Salafist ideals.

4. The rise of pro-Hindu government policies which cause social friction between Muslims and Hindus, are also contributing factors to the rise in the number of Indian nationals supporting IS.

5. Though no official steps have been taken to curb IS recruitment in India, authorities are reaching out and promoting family members and the community elders to take on a pro-active role in counselling youths and monitoring their activities.

Understanding CVE and Anti-Islam Sentiment in Thailand
Don Pathan
Director of Foreign Relations, Patani Forum [Thailand]

Don Pathan

1. The varying schools of religious thought in southern Thailand are causing social tensions and mistrust amongst the general public exacerbating ethno-religious conflicts between the Thai Buddhists and the ethnic Malay Muslims.

2. The ethno-religious conflict between Thai Buddhists and Muslims is aggravated by multiple factors. First is the ongoing fight for socio-cultural space and the general lack of understanding about one another's culture. Second is the continuation of armed insurgencies against assimilation. Third, is the prevailing distrust of Patani residents for the Thai government.

3. With the ethno-religious conflict triggering anti-Islamic sentiments, the Deep South has become vulnerable to growing violence. Hence, it has become more important than ever to keep the society protected from further division.

4. There is a need to reinvent and redefine the fundamental national narrative of what Thailand is so as to create the opportunity for better understanding and tolerance among Thai Buddhists and Muslims in Patani.

Al Qalam Socio-Economic and Educational Support (SEEDS) Program: CVE within the Bangsamoro Peace Negotiation

Mussolini Lidasan
Executive Director, Al Qalam Institute, Ateneo de Davao University [Philippines]

Mussolini Lidasan

1. Violent extremism has a long history in Mindanao. The concept of violent extremism is not new in Mindanao and can be traced to the anti-colonial struggle against American rule in the early 20th century.

2. The first generation of modern-day mujahideen emerged from the struggle for the right to self-determination espoused by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) since the 1960s.

3. The second generation from the 1990s to 2008 was motivated by belief in the idea of a global Islamic duty to fight against infidels. This led to the creation of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) by former MNLF members and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), an MILF splinter group.

4. The current wave of mujahideen is more attuned to IS narratives as exemplified by the Maute Group (MG).Marawi is known to be the capital city of Salafi and Wahhabi ideology in central Mindanao. It saw the eruption of a five-month long conflict between government security forces and the IS-affiliated MG.

5. The key factors behind the Battle for Marawi included the infiltration of IS ideology in Mindanao, clan-based politics, narcopolitics, and poor governance. The siege caused massive destruction of property, killed and displaced thousands of civilians and disrupted the education of displaced children.

6. The Al Qalam SEEDS program aims to reinstate stability in civil society through internal and external efforts to bring back normalcy in the lives of the displaced people. The mission of the program is to generate knowledge through formation and research. It aims to inculcate the vales of neutrality, credibility, social justice and community.

7. The goal is to create a peaceful and open-minded Mindanao based on inter-faith dialogue and strong identities. Some of the key activities organised by the SEEDS program are inter-faith dialogues, inter-faith peace camps, and youth peace camps.

8. Ultimately, a holistic approach is needed to build resilient communities with strategic use of media and better government-academia partnerships.

Syndicate Discussions

1. Increasing demands from other sections of the community - Right-wing groups and think tanks have been putting forth demands for their respective communities, seeing how Muslims have been given several specific concessions. For example, Buddhist groups in southern Thailand have been demanding Buddhist banks since Islamic banking exists within their finance systems. However, they have not been sophisticated in pushing their demands, as they could not justify their religious need for similar privileges as the Muslims.

2. Media misrepresentation of conflict in the Deep South - Media coverage of conflict in the Patani region is occasionally misrepresented, especially in the mainstream Thai media. Most local residents have a deep disregard for the insurgents. Local residents consider the conflict to be an issue between the security forces and the insurgents.

3. Utilise local methods for dialogue - In Mindanao there are platforms through which dialogue between members from all levels of the community can be encouraged. For example, programmes such as “Bitiala” prove to be effective mechanisms, which leverages on the traditional leaders like datus.

4. The aftermath of the Battle for Marawi will not be resolved quickly - Factors contributing to the fighting in Marawi include power struggles between various political clans, family feuds and the proliferation of small arms. The end of fighting will not automatically resolve such lingering issues that underlie conflict in Mindanao as a whole.

5. Marawi throws doubt on the continuation of the peace process - The potential implications for the peace process between the MILF and the Philippine government could be in jeopardy when the next generation of militants take up the group's leadership, as some may believe violence is the only way towards resolving grievances against the government or society.

6. Geographic differences in jihadist extremism in India - Analysts studying the Indian context must take note of the difference in extremism in the northern parts and southern parts of India, as the north is influenced more by the Kashmir issue, and those in the south are influenced more by developments in the Middle East. Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent have established networks in northern India but are not urging people to travel abroad. Al Qaeda in the Indian sub-continent predominantly operates in South India, while a nominal group of IS sympathisers exist as well.

7. IS and Al Qaeda have different goals and implications in India - IS has not been able to effectively penetrate in India, except for some notable cases in states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu. IS in India can be considered a grassroots movement, and is not highly organised. Some younger individuals are willing to travel abroad to Iraq, Syria and Bangladesh instead. Unlike IS, Al-Qaeda does not use online platforms to recruit support, as they do not seem to be actively recruiting.

8. There have been instances of Indian women who were radicalised online - These women commonly work abroad - in Gulf countries and attempt to influence others by spreading extremist propaganda through chat forums.

Distillation

1. Local communities have the potential to influence change, but could also be the source of exacerbated tensions at the grassroots.

2. Inherent respect for local culture and traditional beliefs could act as a bulwark in fending off foreign extremists' influence.

3. The threat of IS in South Asia is not as high as it was expected, despite the large number of Muslims in the region.

Closing Panel / Moderated Discussion

Shashi Jayakumar
Head, CENS

Amarnath Amarasingam
Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Strategic Dialogue [UK]

Bartolomeo Conti
Sociologist-Researcher, EHESS, [France]

Navhat Nuraniyah
Analyst, Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict [Indonesia]

Shashi Jayakumar, Amarnath Amarasingam, Bartolomeo Conti, Navhat Nuraniyah

1. Over 16 years have passed since the attacks on September 11 and analysts are still yet to sufficiently answer many of the core questions. Some nations may have effective programmes for disengaging or even deradicalising individuals, but what works in one location may not be effective elsewhere. Context and local social-cultural practices are important, but so too are the sharing of experiences and best practices regarding prevention, exit and reintegration initiatives.

2. The Islamic State is clearly on the retreat in the physical domain but not necessarily in the battlefield of the mind. There are now credible studies which suggest that rather than the fall of the Islamic State's territorial project being a recipe for disillusionment - and that may happen - it could prove a powerful motivator and source of recruitment, as propaganda harks back to the golden age of the caliphate from 2014-2016.

3. While jihadist terrorism continues to fill headlines, more attention needs to be given to the rise of other radical movements such as those on the far-right which have gained considerable ground in recent times. There is also real potential for violent extremism coming from unexpected sources, like Buddhist nationalism and a re-emergence of anarchism.

4. An issue with the study of terrorism is the criticism that it is not a fully-fledged field of academic inquiry. At conferences there is often a diverse mix of people including sociologists, religious scholars, psychologists, policy makers, and law enforcement officials. Participants from different backgrounds seem to not know how to talk to each other and do not cite each other's work. Further collaboration is essential.

5. Terrorism scholars often feel they need to reinvent the wheel but contributions from pre-existing fields have much to offer, from the reams of DDR programmes in Africa to the input of child psychologists for the counselling of youth returning from Syria.

6. More field work is required. Researchers must try to access radicals and extremists to attempt to understand their motivations and develop constructive interactions. These individuals are often rational and passionate. How is it possible for a young French man to break all of his family and social relationships to go abroad to fight? We must ask him.

7. The way concepts and questions are framed is also critically important. Too often labels create unhelpful obstacles for engagement and potentially stigmatise whole communities. Governments – particularly illiberal regimes – employ terms such as extremist and terrorist to describe oppositional groups. Jihadist movements in different contexts arise largely through local perceived grievances and governments need to be cognisant of the precise reasons violence emerges.

8. Regarding prevention, counter-narratives may be effective to a certain point but we must move beyond the focus on ideology to find ways of appealing to young people's need for belonging and social mobility. The challenge will be designing intervention programmes that succeed in promoting these intrinsic psychological requirements.

9. Re-integration is vital and needs to be prioritised in light of the Islamic State's shrinking territory and attempts by militants and followers to return to their home nations. Governments may need to think beyond punishment and incarceration and focus more on returning people to their communities, particularly those who have not been directly involved in violence.

Workshop Programme

Venue: Marina Mandarin Singapore
Taurus & Leo Ballroom, Level 1 (unless otherwise stated)

Thursday, 28 September 2017

0800 - 0845hrs **Registration**
Venue : Taurus & Leo Ballrooms Foyer, Level 1

0845 - 0900hrs **RSIS Corporate Video and Workshop Welcome Remarks** by ***Shashi Jayakumar***, *Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

0900 - 0945hrs **Panel 1: What Next?**

Chair : ***Shashi Jayakumar***, *Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

Speakers : **What Next for IS After Losing its Heartlands?** by ***Mina al-Lami***, *Editorial Lead, Jihadist Media, BBC Monitoring [UK]*

Islamic State and the Jihadi Social Movement After the Territorial Downfall of the Caliphate by ***Jerome Drevon***, *Research Fellow, Oxford University [UK]*

Counter Narrative in the Age of ISIS in the West by ***Mohamed Amin***, *Founding Chairman and Executive Director, Average Mohamed [USA]*

0945 - 1000hrs **Networking Break**
Venue : MMB Foyer, Level 1

1000 - 1110hrs **Interactive Syndicate Discussions**
Syndicate 1
Venue : Capricorn Ballroom, Level 1

Syndicate 2
Venue : Libra & Gemini Ballrooms, Level 1

Syndicate 3
Venue : Pisces & Aquarius Ballrooms, Level 1

1110 - 1155hrs **Panel 2: The West**

Chair : ***Norman Vasu**, Deputy Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

Speakers : **The "Trump Effect" on Right-Wing Extremism in North America** by ***Ryan Scrivens**, Horizon Postdoctoral Fellow, Concordia University [Canada]*

The Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: Lessons From Canada by ***Amarnath Amarasingam**, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Strategic Dialogue [UK]*

Dealing with Radicals in French Prisons by ***Bartolomeo Conti**, Sociologist-Researcher, Centre D'analyse et D'intervention Sociologiques (EHESS), [France]*

1155 - 1300hrs **Lunch**
Venue : MMB Foyer Level 1

1300 - 1410hrs **Interactive Syndicate Discussions**
Syndicate 1
Venue : Capricorn Ballroom, Level 1

Syndicate 2
Venue : Libra & Gemini Ballrooms, Level 1

Syndicate 3
Venue : Pisces & Aquarius Ballrooms, Level 1

1410 - 1455hrs **Panel 3: Southeast Asia**

Chair : ***Joseph Franco**, Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

Speakers : **Indonesia's Pro-ISIS Groups: From Raqqah to Marawi, the Virtual Caliphate is Alive and Well** by ***Navhat Nuraniyah**, Analyst, Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict [Indonesia]*

Malaysia, With or Without IS by ***Badrul Hisham Ismail**, Programme Director, IMAN Research [Malaysia]*

Jihadism in Southernmost Thailand: A Phantom Menace? by ***Matthew Wheeler**, Senior Analyst, South East Asia, International Crisis Group*

1455 - 1510hrs **Networking Break**
Venue : MMB Foyer, Level 1

1510 - 1620hrs **Interactive Syndicate Discussions**
Syndicate 1
Venue : Capricorn Ballroom, Level 1

Syndicate 2
Venue : Libra & Gemini Ballrooms, Level 1

Syndicate 3
Venue : Pisces & Aquarius Ballrooms, Level 1

1620hrs **Presentation on Rakhine**

Chair : ***Shashi Jayakumar**, Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

Speakers : ***Animesh Roul**, Executive Director, Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict [India]*

1635 - 1655hrs **Q & A**

1655hrs **End of Day 1**

1800 - 2030hrs **Workshop Dinner (By Invitation Only)**
Venue : Peach Blossom, Level 5

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Friday, 29 September 2017

0800 - 0900hrs **Registration**
Venue : Taurus & Leo Ballrooms Foyer, Level 1

0900 - 0930hrs **Panel 4: "Other" Theatres**

Chair : ***Terri-Anne Teo**, Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

Speakers : **ISIS and Russia** by ***Ekaterina Sokirianskaia**, Former Russia Project Director, International Crisis Group [Russia]*

How did al-Qa'ida Succeed in Establishing a 'State' in Yemen (where Islamic State Failed)? by ***Elisabeth Kendall**, Senior Research Fellow in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Oxford University (Pembroke College) [UK]*

0930 - 0950hrs **Q & A**

0950 - 1005hrs **Networking Break**
Venue : MMB Foyer, Level 1

1005 - 1050hrs **Panel 5: Fresh Perspectives in CVE/PVE**

Chair : ***Muhammad Faizal**, Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

Speakers : **Countering Violent Extremism Through Non-Traditional Law Enforcement Methods: Is There a Better Way Than Arrest?** by ***Natalie Davis****, Operational Psychologist, Australian Federal Police [Australia]*

Media, Terrorism and Youth Deradicalisation in Kenya by ***Fredrick Ogenga****, Director, Center for Media, Democracy, Peace and Security, Rongo University [Kenya]*

Radical Minds: Leveraging Behavioural Science for Better P/CVE Policy in MENA by ***Mike Niconchuk****, Senior Researcher, Beyond Conflict [USA]*

1050 - 1200hrs **Interactive Syndicate Discussions**

Syndicate 1
Venue : Capricorn Ballroom, Level 1

Syndicate 2
Venue : Libra & Gemini Ballrooms, Level 1

Syndicate 3
Venue : Pisces & Aquarius Ballrooms, Level 1

1200 - 1300hrs **Lunch**
Venue : MMB Foyer, Level 1

1300 - 1345hrs **Panel 6: South and Southeast Asia**

Chair : ***Joseph Franco****, Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

Speakers : **Al Qalam Socio-Economic and Educational Support (SEEDS) Program: Countering Violent Extremism Within the Bangsamoro Peace Negotiation** by ***Mussolini Lidasan****, Executive Director, Al Qalam Institute, Ateneo de Davao University [Philippines]*

Understanding CVE and Anti-Islam Sentiment in Thailand by ***Don Pathan****, Director of Foreign Relations at the Patani Forum [Thailand]*

India and Enduring Threat of Islamic State by ***Animesh Roul****, Executive Director, Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict [India]*

1345 - 1455hrs **Interactive Syndicate Discussions**

Syndicate 1
Venue : Capricorn Ballroom, Level 1

Syndicate 2
Venue : Libra & Gemini Ballrooms, Level 1

Syndicate 3
Venue : Pisces & Aquarius Ballrooms, Level 1

1455 - 1510hrs **Networking Break**
Venue : MMB Foyer, Level 1

1510 - 1600hrs **Closing Panel / Moderated Discussion**
For this session, all participants and speakers will be able to discuss as a group some of the key issues and takeaways uncovered during the course of the Workshop

Chair : ***Shashi Jayakumar****, Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU*

1600hrs **End of Day 2**

1800 – 2030hrs **Closing Dinner (by Invitation Only)**
Venue : AquaMarine, Level 4

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LIST OF SPEAKERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

SPEAKERS

Amarnath Amarasingam
Senior Research Fellow
Institute for Strategic Dialogue – UK

Mohamed Amin
Founding Chairman and Executive Director
Average Mohamed – USA

Bartolomeo Conti
Sociologist-Researcher
Centre D'analyse et D'intervention Sociologiques (EHESS) – France

Natalie Davis
Operational Psychologist
Australian Federal Police (AFP) – Australia

Jérôme Drevon
Research Fellow
Oxford University – UK

Badrul Hisham Ismail
Programme Director
IMAN Research – Malaysia

Elisabeth Kendall
Senior Research Fellow in Arabic and Islamic Studies
Oxford University (Pembroke College) – UK

Mina al-Lami
Editorial Lead
Jihadist Media
BBC Monitoring – UK

Mussolini Lidasan
Executive Director
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Ateneo de Davao University – Philippines

Mike Niconchuk
Senior Researcher
Beyond Conflict – USA

Navhat Nuraniyah
Analyst
Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict – Indonesia

Fredrick Ogenga
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Rongo University – Kenya

Don Pathan
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Patani Forum – Thailand

Animesh Roul
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About the Centre of Excellence for National Security

The **Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS)** is a research unit of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Established on 1 April 2006, CENS raison d'être is to raise the intellectual capital invested in strategising national security. To do so, CENS is devoted to rigorous policy-relevant analysis across a range of national security issues.

CENS is multinational in composition, comprising both Singaporeans and foreign analysts who are specialists in various aspects of national and homeland security affairs. Besides full-time analysts, CENS further boosts its research capacity and keeps abreast of cutting edge global trends in national security research by maintaining and encouraging a steady stream of Visiting Fellows.

About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** is a professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. RSIS' mission is to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of security studies and international affairs. Its core functions are research, graduate education and networking. It produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Region Studies. RSIS' activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia Pacific.

For more information about RSIS, please visit www.rsis.edu.sg.

About the National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS)

The **National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS)** was formed under the Prime Minister's Office in July 2004 to coordinate security policy, manage national security projects, provide strategic analysis of terrorism and national security related issues, as well as perform Whole-Of-Government research and sense-making in resilience.

NSCS comprises three centres: the National Security Coordination Centre (NSCC), the National Security Research Centre (NSRC) and the Resilience Policy and Research Centre (RPRC).

Please visit www.nscs.gov.sg for more information.

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