

Terrorism: Trends and Challenges

Kumar Ramakrishna
Associate Professor and Head
Centre of Excellence for National Security
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore



Objectives

To analyze the ‘new terrorism’ phenomenon

To examine the evolution of the most significant new terrorist threat to Southeast Asia: the Jemaah Islamiyah ideological milieu

To assess the ways in which operational, ideological and technological trends could herald the rise of lone wolf terrorism

The New Terrorism

The “New Terrorism” is a term used especially since the September 11 2001 terrorist strikes in New York and Washington D.C. – the defining feature of the Fourth Wave

Other Terms used in the academic literature to refer to the same Fourth Wave phenomenon:

- **Mega-Terrorism**
- **Superterrorism**
- **Mass-Casualty Terrorism**
- **Catastrophic Terrorism**
- **Apocalyptic Terrorism**



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Four Key Features of the “New Terrorism”



Ponder the Improbable



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Increased Destructiveness

Gradual trend obvious since the 1990s:

- **Bombay 1993 – car/truck bombings – 400 killed**
- **WTC 1993 – 6 killed, 1042 injured**
- **Tokyo 1995 – 12 killed, 1000s injured**
- **Oklahoma City 1995 – 168 killed**
- **East Africa 1998 – 257 killed, 5000 injured**
- **New York, Washington 2001- 3000 killed**
- **Bali 2002: 202 killed**
- **Madrid 2004: 200 killed**
- **Other attacks since then...Jakarta 2003 and 2004; Bali and London 2005...**
- **Islamabad Marriott Sep 2008 and...Mumbai Nov 2008**
- **Jakarta Marriott and Ritz-Carlton July 2009**
- **Oslo – Breivik attacks July 2011**
- **Boston – Tsarnaev brothers April 2013**
- **Nairobi – Al-Shabaab attack Sep 2013**

- ***Aim: Create mass civilian casualties***



Religious Dimension

- The “New Terrorism” is different from Secular Nationalist Forms of Terrorism:
 - Red Army, Red Army Faction, Red Brigades, IRA, PLO in the 1960s/1970s
 - ETA, LTTE (until May 2009) today
- In Secular Nationalist Terrorism, Terror was used as a Bargaining Tool
 - Use of violence carefully calibrated to express political aims
 - Fear of alienating terrorists’ wider community of support
 - Ultimately, a viable and sustainable political solution was sought after
- The New Terrorists of today are driven by a form of religious logic
 - Al Qaeda, JI
 - Less restraints on violence against “unclean” unbelievers
 - Nebulous Goal of establishing God’s law on earth
 - Eg. “Restore the Caliphate” aim of Al Qaeda

Networked Structure

- **Leverage on Information Technology – The Internet used as a means of recruitment, communication, training and co-ordination**
- **Many terrorists have science and engineering background – not uneducated peasants but rather frustrated educated middle class leadership and impressionable young foot-soldiers**
 - **Ayman Al-Zawahiri a medical doctor**
 - **Dr Azahari Husin a PhD in Statistics from UK**
 - **Khalid Sheikh Mohammad has an engineering degree from US university**
 - **Christmas Day 2009 underwear bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmuttalab an engineering student at UCL**



- **Co-ordination expedited by a Shared ideology or worldview**

Flexible Leadership Style

- **Top-Down Centralized Approach**
 - Pre-October 2001: Al Qaeda Central co-ordinated operations from Afghanistan eg. 9/11 attacks directed by Al Qaeda Central
 - US Operation Enduring Freedom attacks disrupted Al Qaeda Central
 - But Al Qaeda Central regrouping in Afghan/Pakistan border
 - Other AQ regional hubs, eg. AQAP, ISIS, AQIM, Al-Shabab
- **Bottom-Up Self-Organizing Approach**
 - Loss of Al Qaeda Central structure but NOT the ideology
 - The ideology has spread across the world via the Internet
 - Self-organizing, home-grown terrorist cells have developed in various parts of the world
 - Self-radicalized individuals and “bunches of guys” a new threat – no previous record which means “clean skins” – more on this later

The Jemaah Islamiyah Ideological Milieu

The December 2001 Jemaah Islamiyah plot to attack Western Targets in Singapore was a Shock

- **JI a Indonesian-based, but transnational, Southeast Asian terror network**
- **Sought to create a pan-Southeast Asian Islamic State**
- **Four Mantiqis or Regions in Southeast Asia, from Southern Thailand to Australia**
- **Origins in the old Darul Islam separatist movement in Indonesia**

The October 2002 Bali Bombings reiterated the very real threat to Southeast Asian countries of JI attacks

Further JI and JI-related Strikes

- **Aug 2003 Jakarta Marriott**
- **Sep 2004 outside Australian Embassy Jakarta**
- **Oct 2005 Bali II attacks**
- **July 2009 Jakarta Marriott/Ritz-Carlton strikes and smaller scale strikes since then**

JI and associated networks like JAT – the ideological milieu - represent the Key New Terrorist Threat to Southeast Asia



The JI Threat Today

- **Greatly improved cross-border co-operation between Southeast Asian security and intelligence agencies since 2002 have resulted in very significant successes against JI**
- **Some notable successes in recent years:**
 - **Elimination of key JI bomb expert Dr Azahari Husin in Nov 2005**
 - **Capture of senior JI leaders Zarkasih and Abu Dujana in June 2007 and prosecution in April 2008**
 - **Recapture of Singapore JI leader Mas Selamat Kastari in April 2009**
 - **Elimination of Noordin M. Top in September 2009**



Evolving Threat

Jl has been eclipsed by associated organized networks like Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), Al Qaeda in Aceh, as well as smaller, splinter cells which seem to be relatively self-organizing eg. Cirebon Cell, HASMI, East Indonesia Mujahidin Commandos (MIT)

The doctrinal emphasis at the moment seems to toggle between:

- **Local targets and Western targets**
- **Organized *jihad* or individual *jihad* – MIT and Poso vs Cirebon Cell**
- **The *transnational element* remains distinct: eg. Singapore and US embassies in Jakarta have been apparently targeted; recent focus on Myanmar embassy, new phenomenon of Indonesian Syrian volunteers**

In Short...

The JI ideological milieu remain a clear and present danger...as the July 17 2009 JI attacks on Jakarta Marriott and Ritz-Carlton confirm...suicide bombers were “clean skins” – close shaves since then...

Threat is evolving: New groups such will likely evolve as “extremists in Indonesia have shown an ability to adapt, regroup, regenerate and fight on” ICG

New Trends 1: Operational

Due to intense security and intelligence action since 9/11 Al Qaeda has mutated.

Bruce Hoffman: the current configuration of the globalized Al Qaeda movement comprises 'four distinct, but not mutually exclusive, dimensions' in 'descending order of sophistication.'

First, 'Al-Qaeda Central', comprising the 'remnants of the pre 9/11 al-Qaeda organization'

Second, 'Al-Qaeda Affiliates and Associates', including its franchise networks such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, as well as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, ISIS etc.

Third, 'Al-Qaeda Network', comprising 'amorphous groups of al-Qaeda adherents who are likely to have had some prior terrorism experience' and connection with 'Al-Qaeda Central' eg. London 7/7 bombers

Fourth, 'Al-Qaeda Galaxy', comprising 'home-grown Islamic radicals who have no direct connection with al-Qaeda' but are 'prepared to carry out attacks in solidarity with or support of al-Qaeda's radical jihadi agenda'.

What holds this global Al Qaeda movement together is an ideological narrative of 'a shared sense of enmity and grievance towards the United States and the West in general, and their host-nations in particular'

New Trends 2: Ideological

In the mid-2000s the Syrian Al Qaedaist ideologue Abu Musab Al-Suri published his well-known tract *The Call for Global Islamic Resistance*.

Arguing against reliance on centralized direction from Al Qaeda Central, Al-Suri pushed instead for action by *independent small cells acting on their own initiative, to exploit local opportunities to strike at enemies of the Muslim world wherever they were to be found.*

Al-Suri's tract found ready audiences worldwide, including in Southeast Asia, where his work was translated into *Bahasa Indonesia*.



New Trends 2: Ideological

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New Trends 3: Technological

Rapid technological advances that have accompanied globalization and facilitated the evolution of the new terrorist phenomenon, continues apace. Central to this trend is the Internet.

Both operational decentralization of Al Qaeda planning and activities as well as the recent doctrinal emphasis on small-cell and lone-wolf activity, have been facilitated via the Internet and social networking sites.

The increasing availability of cheap smartphones with highly affordable Internet broadband access is important.

This implies that at-risk individuals globally can surf extremist websites without having to be bound to a desk – and having their surfing patterns detected.



Rise of the Lone Wolves?

Technology will be the defining characteristic of the next wave of terrorism

Lone operators can become significant players because the Internet gives indiscriminate access to information about targets and types of weapons

The lone operator or lone wolf may potentially employ CBRN weapons/material and escalate the number of civilian casualties

(Jeffrey D. Simon)



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Final Thoughts

Terrorism is a constantly mutating, evolving phenomenon

Governments and civil societies must work together locally and internationally to understand it and devise ways to counter its worst effects

