
The State of Jemaah Islamiya

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The war on terrorism has continued apace in Southeast Asia, and the governments in the region and their western counterparts deserve credit for the arrests of some 200 Jemaah Islamiya (JI) members through July 2003, including several of its *shura* or leadership body, including Hambali, its operational chief. Hambali has revealed more names of JI members throughout the region. The spiritual leader of the group, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, will be incarcerated for three years, pending appeal. Although Hambali may have been leading his interrogators astray, he has stated that the JI organization has been devastated.¹

The Bali investigations, in particular, have led to a far greater understanding of the network's operations and command and control structure that has in turn led to subsequent arrests. These arrests were significant, especially as JI is not a large organization, between 500 and 1,500 people. It is now less able to plan and execute terrorist attacks than it was a year ago, especially against hardened targets, such as U.S. embassies. However, it still maintains its capacity to attack soft targets, such as the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta, which was bombed on August 5, 2003, or other venues such as nightclubs or malls. One cannot forget that since the September 11 attacks in the United States, JI has been one of the most active al-Qaeda affiliates, and Southeast Asia one of the most important theaters of operation. Although al-Qaeda has suffered severe setbacks and the arrest of two-thirds of its known senior leadership, the organization will continue to rely more on regional affiliates. One would be foolish to underestimate JI's capabilities or goals. As many of the key operatives are still at large, the organization retains the capacity and will to launch devastating terror attacks throughout the region. This paper will address 12 particular causes for alarm.

I. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TERROR

There is no single psychological makeup of terrorists, yet there are universal traits that have emerged in the vast literature of the psychology and sociology

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of terrorism:² Terrorists are violent, stimulation-seeking zealots. They are true believers who tend not to waiver from the cause. For example, although one of the Bali bombers, Ali Imron, expressed guilt for the bombings, he disagreed with the means, not the end.³ More cynically, one could also argue that he was simply trying to escape the firing squad, which he did, unlike his two brothers and Imam Samudra. Terrorists are rational and engage in cost-benefit analysis; they are not psychopaths. Mentally unstable individuals pose a great security risk for terrorist groups and can jeopardize entire operations. They are driven by small-group dynamics, which tend to create in and out groups, and they engage in “group-think behavior,” alienating members who do not conform ideologically.

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Finally, they are often driven by a desire for revenge. When the Bali bombers were arrested in late 2002, they expressed confusion that most of the victims were Australians and not Americans. They later

rationalized that Australians were allied with the United States and had a prominent role in East Timor. Yet Australians have become targets of JI in their own right. For example, Hambali has already admitted that because of the prominent role of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in the Bali investigation (in addition to their role in East Timor), Australians are targets, not simply seen as an extension of the Americans.⁴

An arrest and seizure of a stockpile in Semarang, Indonesia, in July 2003 revealed a huge cache of not simply explosives, chemical precursors, and detonators, but also of light arms and sniper rifles. This raised alarm that JI was adopting a new tactic: politically-motivated assassinations. All of the names on the list of intended targets found in a JI safehouse were members of President Megawati's Democratic Party for Struggle Indonesia (PDI-P), indicating a desire for revenge against the leadership that authorized the crackdown on JI.

The will to inflict damage against secular states and foreigners still exists. The trials of the four major ringleaders of the Bali bombing have ended. Three have been sentenced to death, while another was sentenced to life in prison; moreover, the appeals process has been expedited. Although Abu Bakar Ba'asyir was acquitted of terrorism charges, he still received a four-year sentence.

2. LYING LOW

Jl, like al-Qaeda, is not event-driven. Terrorism is asymmetric warfare and terrorist groups tend to strike when they have a high probability of success; they cannot afford failure. Jl has suffered setbacks in the past year and a half and will have to patiently rebuild its ranks in order to remain a viable organization. On

one hand, an attack is important for morale and to reassure its constituency that it is still a viable fighting force. Many members may simply want to lash out and cause as much pain as possible. On the other hand, JI must give priority to rebuilding its network through recruiting and training. Hambali seems to have confirmed that there was a debate within the organization whether to continue the pace of attacks or to lie low and rebuild in the wake of the post-Bali arrests. Hambali himself appears to support the latter course.⁵

These principles are long-standing. The General Guidelines for Struggle of Jemaah Islamiya, known by its Indonesian acronym (PUPJI), a 1996 document that codified the authority structure and ordering principles and philosophy of JI, also includes the *General Manual for Operations*, which is a vague and somewhat philosophical document, and a far cry from the al-Qaeda training manual that was found in a Manchester house.⁶ It does discuss how operations should be conducted. It emphasizes that “the operation should be planned and carried out according to plan.” It also emphasizes that the group “view carefully and honestly all our potential strengths and effective powers we possess,” and “determine points of target at the enemy and the environment to be handled in relation with our goals.”⁷ The document calls for four stages of operations: 1) Planning, 2) Execution, 3) Reporting, and 4) Evaluation. Emphasis is placed on education, meticulous planning, and learning from past acts (including mistakes). The document also emphasizes strength-building operations, which are defined as lengthy processes that include spiritual and physical strengthening. The goals of this educational period include enlightenment, discipline, the instilling of a sense of loyalty, physical readiness, weapons skills, tactical and strategic thinking, and leadership development.

One of the lasting legacies of Hambali is the importance placed on maintaining the integrity of the organization. Press reports indicate that he has confessed that Azahari Husin and Zulkarnaen have replaced him, indicating that they had contingency plans in place.⁸ Although the Mantiqi structure—the middle level of the organization that was based on geographical commands—appears to be in disarray, there seems to be more direct interaction between the top leaders and the *fiab* (the individual cells that have more operational autonomy) since Hambali’s incarceration.

JI leaders have always placed a premium on maintaining the integrity of the organization and on its command and control in particular. When leaders are arrested, they are quickly replaced. JI, like al-Qaeda, has an ability to quickly tap new leaders to maintain the organization’s command and control network. On one hand, the new leaders may not have as much experience or authority, yet the organization is still able to hold meetings and maintain some degree of command and control. On the other hand, there is a conscious decision to make sure that the organizational command and control system remains intact. There is an

authority system, and rituals, such as pledging *bayat*, an oath of loyalty. There is always an attempt made to have a reasonable quorum of leaders when important decisions are made. However, parliamentary details tend to be ignored in the heat of battle. Following the crackdown in Malaysia and Singapore in December 2001 and in Indonesia after October 2002, meetings became less frequent with fewer attendees. It was simply too risky for them to meet often after all of the region's intelligence assets were being focused on them. One interesting aspect is the pre-eminence of the *amir* (spiritual leader) in decision-making. The PUPJI clearly states that "Should there be a difference of opinion between the *amir* and the majority of votes, the decision of the *amir* prevails."⁹

There is also a philosophical rationale for the idea of lying low. In considering the works of Abdullah Azzam—particularly *Join the Caravan*—who created the ideological model for al-Qaeda, one can see that the organization is based on the life of the Prophet Mohammed. After God spoke to the Prophet, and he tried to convert people, he was driven from Mecca. Mohammed had to retreat (*hijra*) to Medina to regroup, recruit, and train (*tarbiyyah*) so that he could defeat the enemies of Islam (*qital*) and impose Islamic law (*sharia*).¹⁰ Lying low and regrouping is therefore nothing to be ashamed of or to become demoralized over in the

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thinking of Islamic militants. Jemaah Islamiya and al-Qaeda have always placed a high premium on education, training, and meticulous planning. There is no evidence that they are trying to lash out with ill-timed and conceived attacks to take the pressure off themselves.

JI is in full recruitment mode. One aspect of JI that is so impressive is its ability to recruit across the board, irrespective of education or class. Its recruits are not just students from the *madrasas* of the region, but young technical students and disenfranchised youth with little prospects. They are younger, angrier, and technologically more savvy than previous members. JI members also include many technical faculty members, including architects, engineers, geophysicists, chemists, and robotics engineers. So much of the JI motivation is driven by extreme anti-Westernism that is simply cloaked in simplistic interpretations of Islam.

One of the prime motivating factors and recruitment mechanisms is often a charismatic spiritual leader who can inspire people to *jihad*. Since the arrest of Ba'asyir and his successor Rusdan, there is no apparent *amir*. It is of course possible that Ba'asyir has remained the spiritual leader of the organization. From behind the porous walls of his Jakarta prison, his speeches and writings are still available to his audience, and his jail sentence makes him a martyr for the JI cause.

It is clear that in the near future no one will be willing to take on as high a profile as Ba'asyir did. One interesting thing to look at in trying to ascertain from where future JI religious leaders will emerge is which *madrasas* JI members are using to educate their own children and to which clerics they entrust the spiritual upbringing. There is a lot of concern on the part of regional intelligence officials regarding the Thai Wahhabi leader and anti-Western firebrand Ismail Lufti, whom they suspect is a member of JI. Although there is no evidence that he is a leader of the organization, he is a very prominent and respected cleric with a worldview similar to that of JI.

In short, we must be concerned about the current counterterrorism strategy of simply trying to decapitate the organization. Leaders are replaceable and there is an endless pool of recruits. The failure of counterterrorism in Southeast Asia is that it has not necessarily targeted the institutionalized aspect of JI.

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3. MOTIVATION FOR JIHAD

The underlying conditions that initially drove these people to pursue terrorism have not diminished. The economies of Southeast Asia have not fully recovered from the Asian economic crisis, nor are they likely to do so in the face of intense economic competition over trade and investment with China. Mass unemployment, especially in Indonesia, is very destabilizing. Diminished expectations and frustration-aggression, especially among educated youth, will provide fertile recruitment grounds for years to come. Although President Bush announced \$157 million in educational aid to assist Indonesia's secular and non-secular schools (much of the aid had already been pledged and committed) during his very brief stopover in Bali following the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Bali, such aid will do little to diminish anti-American sentiment unless there are concurrent steps to increase trade and investment as well as lower tariffs and import quotas on Southeast Asian goods. A key component of an effective counterterrorism strategy must be job creation, though this is unlikely to occur.

There are other important motivating forces and factors at work. When one analyzes the motivation for suicide bombing and terrorism in the Middle East, especially amongst Palestinians, it is clear that one of the most important factors is a deep-seated sense of humiliation. This is quite easy to understand in the context of the daily lives of Palestinians. Across the Arab world, there is a sense of Muslim humiliation vis-à-vis the West. It is obvious that Southeast Asian

extremists are also humiliated enough to be driven to terrorism. What is causing this sense of humiliation?

First, there is a desire to identify the Southeast Asian *jihad* with the global Islamist *jihad*. Simply put, militants in Southeast Asia want to identify themselves with the Muslim core, and they no longer want Southeast Asians to be considered the Islamic periphery. They are seeking to inculcate Southeast Asians in Islamic values, and they are clearly tapping into the rapid growth of Islamic consciousness that has spread throughout the region.¹¹ Southeast Asians, through greater media coverage and the so-called Al Jazeera effect, are identifying more with the plights of their co-religionists around the Islamic world, especially the Iraqis and Palestinians. The Palestinians have become a metaphor for injustice in Southeast Asia.¹² The Pew Charity's Global Attitudes poll found that the number of Muslims in Indonesia who believed that Islam was under siege almost doubled in the last year: from 33 percent in 2002 to 59 percent in 2003. Moreover, 80 percent of the respondents felt more solidarity with the Islamic world than they did in the past.¹³

A second way that Southeast Asians are feeling humiliated again relates to their changing attitudes towards their co-religionists. The same poll found that 82 percent of the Indonesian respondents were upset that the Iraqi regime did not

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put up a stronger fight against U.S. forces, and that the cost of victory for the Americans was not higher. The Indonesian rate was the third-highest behind Moroccans (93 percent) and Jordanians (91 percent). In simple terms, they did not want the West to humiliate the Muslim world by defeating one of its stronger states so easily. Southeast Asians in general see the U.S. occupation of Iraq as the epitome of hegemonic arrogance and some are starting to rally around the *jihadist* campaign.¹⁴

The West tends to be too focused on the *madrassa* education; both al-Qaeda and JI were able to recruit across the spectrum and particularly well at the technical schools. Does Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, or the Philippines, given their current economic conditions, need another 22-year-old computer science graduate? Simply, no. These graduates sit around, blame the West and globalization for their predicament, hack, create malicious computer viruses and worms, and learn their *jihad* online. This *jihad* is as much about anti-Westernism (especially anti-Americanism) as it is about Islam. The Pew Global Attitudes Project reported one of the most precipitous drops in support for the United States in the past three years was among Indonesians. Whereas 75 and 61 percent of Indonesians had positive images of the United States in 2000 and 2002 respectively, only 15 per-

cent did in 2003.¹⁵ Whereas 31 percent of Indonesians supported the global war on terrorism in 2002, only 23 percent supported it in 2003, despite the deadly terrorist attacks in Indonesia in October 2002.¹⁶

The United States needs the support of moderate Muslim leaders throughout the war to combat terrorism and intolerant radicals and to provide an ideological counter. Yet, we seem to undermine these potential allies at every chance with our policies. Moderate Indonesian clerics who supported the war on terrorism were often leading demonstrations against U.S. actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even those that did not support the U.S. position have a hard time assuaging popular anger against the United States and its policies.

Such sentiments have only increased with the Iraq war. For Muslims, there is only one lesson to be learned from Iraq: no state can confront the United States and her allies; the only way that Americans can be made to pay and “taste” the humiliation that Muslims feel every day is through terror. States in the Islamic world have failed to stand up to the United States and to defend fellow Muslims; only non-state actors such as al-Qaeda and its affiliates have the will and capacity.

4. THE COLONELS

Although a number of *shura* members were arrested, the majority of the 2,000 arrests to date have been of foot soldiers with no knowledge of operational plans or the organizational structure of JI. These individuals performed specific functions (running safe houses, meeting contacts, surveillance, and procurement). Very few operatives with technical proficiency enough to plan, coordinate, and execute attacks have been arrested. They have the rank and stature to command foot soldiers. Most of these individuals were trained either in al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan or Camp Abu Bakar in Mindanao, the Philippines. These include Zulkaraenen, Syawal, Dulmatin, Azahari Husin, Noordin Mohammed Mop Top, Abu al-Furkan, Abdul Jabar, and others. These individuals have technical and bomb-making expertise, a knowledge of secure communications, an understanding of where to go for funding and of how to communicate with the diversified al-Qaeda center, and finally the clout to order operations.

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One of the key variables is who JI leaders are training to serve as their own lieutenants as well as the question of how well new members are being trained. What counterterrorist operations hope to achieve is the “degrading” of JI members.

We have all seen the al-Qaeda training videotapes that give bomb-making lessons. Likewise, Azahari's bomb "cookbooks" were written in a way that nearly anyone, even someone with only a limited Koranic education, could understand. Indonesian and Australian police have found pre-weighed bags of chemicals in some quarter-master dens allowing for quick construction of bombs with little technical expertise.¹⁷ Moreover, the most recent Bali and Jakarta bombings involved more lethal and more complex bombs than the 2000 attacks. Has that explosive production knowledge been effectively transmitted? Can the training be as effective while they are on the run and spending most of their resources on trying to ensure their own survival? The September 2003 arrests of 19 JI members in Karachi, Pakistan, may indicate that JI is moving out of area to conduct its training in a more secure environment.¹⁸ But the issue of training also brings into question the next variable, the role of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

5. THE MILF

The MILF has been fighting for a homeland in the Philippines since the 1970s and began to receive significant amounts of funding (lethal and non-lethal) from al-Qaeda beginning in the early 1990s. In return for the aid, the MILF opened its doors to al-Qaeda trainers, who instructed not just MILF cadres in terrorism, but also local JI operatives who were unable to get to Pakistan and Afghanistan in significant numbers. Until the MILF cuts its ties to JI, there will be a terrorist problem in the region, as without the MILF camps and secure base area JI cannot train effectively. Yet there have not been any incentives for the MILF to cut ties or cooperate. Although its members would strenuously deny it, the MILF resorts to terror when it suffers battlefield losses, such as in early 2003 when it bombed the Davao airport or after the 1999 offensive when it bombed Manila's Light Rail Transit system. MILF members deny every act of terror or, when confronted with overwhelming evidence that implicates them, blame the attack on "lost commands."¹⁹

Although peace talks are set to resume again at the time of writing (preliminary talks and negotiations beginning in August 2003 have been fruitless), there seems to be no willingness on the part of either side to compromise on the three issues that led to the breakdown of talks in late 2001. First, the MILF has given no indication whatsoever that it has abandoned its quest for an independent state or that it would accept the government's offer of autonomy. The MILF rejected the 1996 peace treaty between the government and its rival, the Moro National Liberation Front, which created the nominally self-governing Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The MILF believes (not without reason) that the ARMM has been a failure and refuses to accept a similar proposal.

Second, the MILF is unlikely to accept “joint development projects” that the Philippine government hopes to use to legitimize its position, despite the \$30 million that was put on the table by the Americans or the \$130 million offered by the Philippine government. The MILF has demanded that the government simply give it the funds to use for development projects through the Bangsamoro Development Agency. The government obviously refuses as it wants the money to legitimize its position, not to buy political support for the MILF. Third, the MILF sees cantonment, disarmament, and demobilization as tantamount to surrender.

On top of the three issues that led to the talks breaking down in 2001 are four additional concerns. First, a very palpable sense of mistrust exists on the part of the warring parties. It will take a long time to get back to the level of trust that was reached in 2001. Both sides blame each other for violating cease fires, seizing land, or perpetrating terrorist attacks. The second concern is the apparent unwillingness of each side to implement the ceasefire, or alternatively, the inability to exert command and control over troops. Third, the death of Hashim Salamat, the MILF’s founder and leader, also calls into question the ability of the MILF Central Committee to cut deals with the government. The fact is, analysts know very little about generational and factional differences and how this will play out in the peace process. The new MILF leader, Ebrahim al Haj Murad, is known to be a pragmatic individual and a more moderate leader than Hashim Salamat, but how well he is holding the organization together or his ability to make significant compromises is yet unknown. He has been a vice-chairman for political and military affairs for over a decade and is well respected amongst the rank and file, yet the senior ranks of the MILF have been monopolized by the same individuals for a long time, thus limiting opportunities for a new generation of leaders to emerge. Fourth, the Philippine government, in the midst of a presidential election, is unlikely to yield much at the negotiating table. President Arroyo’s poll numbers are substantially up and despite breaking her December 2002 vow not to run for reelection, the best indications are that she will triumph. Certainly she has the backing of Lakas, former President Fidel Ramos, and the recently retired and politically powerful prelate, Cardinal Jamie Sin. Her appeal is not based on her policies, but on the fact that none of the current crop of presidential aspirants has yet captured the imagination of Filipino voters or has national stature or integrity.

Perhaps the only tangible difference is that the United States is more involved in the peace process.²⁰ U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matt Daley secretly met with members of the MILF leadership in Kuala Lumpur and warned it to cut ties to JI, and tried to indicate the seriousness the United States attaches to this issue. Daley offered \$30 million to the MILF as an incentive to signing a peace accord.²¹ Yet the MILF is insistent that this revolution is about principles and that they cannot be bought off.

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likely, and to that end, terror will remain part of its arsenal, thus necessitating ties to JI and al-Qaeda. There is now significant evidence of two new camps operating deep in MILF territory where Indonesians are being trained. There are other reasons to be concerned about the MILF. First, the growing closeness of the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf, another secessionist group linked to al-Qaeda, will complicate matters. Although there have been talks between the two organizations in the past, they have never consummated an alliance due to differences over strategy, ideology, and jealousy over foreign money. Yet recent reports of the MILF shipping an arms cache to the recently reconstituted Abu Sayyaf are alarm-

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ing. Although differences between the groups remain, the MILF views its links with Abu Sayyaf in the same way as its terrorist strategy: an effective way to keep the Philippine armed forces spread thin. Likewise, there is now evidence of cooperation at the unit level between communist New People's Army and MILF units. Again, there is little ideological affinity, but there is a shared enemy. One also has to look at the evidence of collusion between the two with regards to arms shipments. For example,

when Philippine troops overran the Buliok Complex they found evidence that the MILF was purchasing weapons from North Korea, a tie that was likely facilitated by the New People's Army (NPA).

6. COUNTRIES OF CONVENIENCE

Terrorism differs from transnational crime in that it has no profit motive, but the underlying conditions that benefit one also benefit the other. Thus effective counterterrorism must be based on rigorous law enforcement that targets gun-running, people-smuggling, money-laundering, and document-forging. All of these are endemic to Southeast Asia, which is a reason why al-Qaeda was first attracted to the region. The will of states to crack down on these activities—especially in concert with one another—is sorely lacking. The states of the region have not addressed the issue of terrorist-transnational crime convergence.

These states are also plagued by corruption. The ability of senior JI operatives, such as Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, to escape from prison is not shocking but demoralizing. All the counterterrorism aid and training in the world cannot address low-level corruption. Most MILF weaponry is illicitly purchased from government stockpiles. And it is not just the Philippines. There have been interesting reports of disgruntled police in Indonesia: JI operative Azahari Husin

seems to have slipped away a few too many times, prompting different police units to be brought in for sensitive operations like the Semarang arrests.

7. RANGE OF VULNERABILITIES

Although JI has lost the capacity to focus on hard targets such as a well-defended U.S. embassy, an enormous range of targets is still vulnerable. In one of his last major recorded statements, in October 2002, Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's number two leader, warned that "we will strike at the nodes of your economy."²² We must take him very seriously. One of the goals of al-Qaeda is to rock the economic foundations of the West and its allies. Mass unemployment leads to frustration which leads to aggression. Although I refuse to accept the proposition that poverty causes terror, poverty does create the underlying conditions that allow terrorism to prosper. The West and its policies of globalization are convenient scapegoats.

Likely targets include less-guarded Western embassies (in particular Australian and British), especially those in office towers; symbols of U.S. economic power, such as office towers with corporate logos; and critical infrastructure such as refineries or pipelines and power-grids (the MILF has started targeting these with ease and effectiveness). JI cell members arrested in conjunction with the Semarang raid have stated that U.S. gas and mining firms were being specifically targeted (Unocal, Halliburton, ExxonMobil, Caltex, Conoco-Philipp, and Union Texas) while footage of Freeport McMoRan appears on a video produced by an al-Qaeda suspect detained in Indonesia.²³ These firms represent the core of the Indonesian economy.

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In addition, there is a huge range of soft targets: hotels, shopping malls, bars, nightclubs, housing complexes, and international schools. Airport security is abysmal in smaller regional airports and thus suicide-hijackings remain a distinct possibility. The potential of a plane taking off from Riau or Batam and being crashed anywhere in Singapore is not an unreasonable scenario, and such an attack would devastate the Singaporean economy.

The Mombasa attack and the apparent al-Qaeda attempt to procure surface-to-air missiles (SAMs or MANPADS) are significant in Southeast Asia because the two most prominent corporate symbols of Australia and Singapore are their airlines. An attack on airliners would be economically devastating in a region so dependent on foreign investment and tourism. Hambali has admitted that he and a colleague were planning to purchase shoulder-launched SAMs to

attack jetliners in Thailand.²⁴ Indicating the concern that the U.S. government places on the threat of such attacks, the single most important agreement that came out of the October 2003 APEC summit in Bangkok was an agreement that pledged states to restrict the sale and transfer of these weapons.

Although there is still no consensus among law enforcement officials whether Iqbal was a suicide bomber at Paddy's Bar in Bali,²⁵ the psychological threshold for suicide bombings has been crossed in Southeast Asia. A former member of Darul Islam, which was in many ways a precursor organization to JI, stated "Suicide bombings are a new development in Jemaah Islamiya activities. When I was in the movement, we never had the concept. But what we did have is the understanding that we will face death in our struggle."²⁶ Interrogations in Malaysia revealed that Hambali had recruited some six individuals for martyrdom missions. Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group contends that a JI leader, Zulkarnaen, established a suicide cell of JI, known as the Laskar Khos, which has approximately 15 members.²⁷ Martyrdom missions are not going to become a regular occurrence in Southeast Asia, but they are now part of the arsenal and cannot be discounted.

Two recent arrests portend the future of JI attacks. Malaysian authorities arrested one person with 10kg of chemicals similar to those used in the Bali bombings, as well as sodium azide which can be used to make poisonous gas.²⁸ This fits into a pattern of al-Qaeda activity indicating a strong desire to operationalize weapons of mass destruction. He confessed that he was in a six person cell, of which each member was charged with the procurement of similar chemicals. None of the other cell members have been arrested. In a 2003 raid on a JI safehouse in the southern Philippines, a manual on bio-weapons was found.

The mid-July 2003 arrests in Semarang, Indonesia, led to the seizure of a massive cache, including 900kg of potassium chlorate (the Bali bomb was only 400kg), 160kg of TNT, 1,025 detonators, 65 PETN caps (a military explosive), timers, books on bombing and other equipment, two M-16s, two FN sniper rifles, 11 rocket-propelled grenades, pistols, and 22,000 rounds of ammunition. Regarding the explosives, it is clear that chemicals and materials are still readily available despite Indonesian pledges that they would restrict their sales. Eight "bags" were already shipped and have not been recovered. Indonesian police were coy about the meaning of "bags," but one investigator told me that often the chemicals were pre-weighed and in bags so that they could be quickly mixed.²⁹ It is possible that the bags together comprised the one bomb used in the 2003 Jakarta Marriott bombing.

The small arms are perhaps more troubling as they signal two things. The first is the shift in strategy to the assassination of political leaders, especially in the election year. Although I believe this would be a foolish course of action and would create a backlash against them, I do not rule out its occurrence. They are

motivated by desires for revenge and instability. Second, small arms could be used in conjunction with a bombing to breach external or perimeter security, which happened with the 2003 Riyadh attacks.

8. LANDS OF JIHAD

From 1999 to 2000, JI leaders were actively engaged in fomenting sectarian conflict in the Maluku and Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, and to that end established two paramilitary arms. The logic was simple: if al-Qaeda's first generation of members were veterans of the anti-Soviet *mujahedeen*, then new generations of recruits to al-Qaeda and its affiliates had to be radicalized by their own holy war. Although the Indonesian government finally stepped in, restored order, and negotiated fragile peace accords, a number of deadly attacks, both bombings and assassinations, have occurred in Poso since this summer, aimed at wrecking the peace process and rekindling sectarian violence. The outbreaks of sectarian violence will play into the hands of militants who will manipulate these conflicts and use them to propagandize against the state, recruit, and fundraise.

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9. INDEPENDENT AL-QAEDA CELLS

Much of the focus of the war on terrorism in Southeast Asia has been on Jemaah Islamiya, yet there has been little attention paid to independent al-Qaeda cells and operatives. States in the region feel threatened by JI, yet not by al-Qaeda. This is a dangerous attitude. First, if we begin with the premise that al-Qaeda seeks to expand its war, to spread American and Western resources too thin, then we should expect that Southeast Asia will only increase in its importance as a theater of operations. Indeed Southeast Asia has emerged as one of the key theaters of operation. Second, we cannot forget that al-Qaeda first came to Southeast Asia in the early 1990s, years before JI was founded. It developed its network slowly and deliberately without attracting the suspicion of the region's security services.

There is no way to ascertain the number of operatives in the region, yet al-Qaeda has been a more dispersed organization. One should not forget that when senior al-Qaeda operative Abdullah al-Rahim al-Nishiri was arrested in Yemen in

early October 2002, he was reportedly on his way to Malaysia. Al-Qaeda is a dispersed and decentralized organization with multiple nodes of power, and thus has diverse operations capabilities.

Obviously states in the region have become more vigilant about immigrants from the Middle East. However, over time, the economic costs of heightened vigilance will be too great. This already has been seen in Malaysia which, following the September 11 attacks, ended its visa-free entry rules for members of Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) states. However, as Malaysia had established itself as a center of Islamic banking and business and an important tourist destination for people from the Middle East, it reinstated the visa-free rule. The porousness of Southeast Asia's borders and its tourist-friendly lax visa requirements will continue to attract operatives.

10. THE MONEY TRAIL

The financial war on terrorism has failed in Southeast Asia and almost no assets have currently been frozen, although the region has become more financially important to al-Qaeda.³⁰ Much of the fundraising is impossible to stop, such as cash passed through the informal underground remittance system often known as *hawala*. Hambali has revealed that JI was increasingly dependent on cash infusions for terrorist acts. But even the money that we should be able to curtail, we have not. Although the U.S. Treasury Department identified 300 individuals, corporations, and charities involved in terrorist finance, the list was winnowed down to 28 individuals and corporations, many of which are already arrested or defunct. The designations that were finally announced on September

Even states that are threatened by terrorism either question the utility of going after terrorist funding or fear the adverse effect that such measures will have on their economies.

5, 2003, were a diplomatic compromise and belied the scope of the problem.³¹ The U.S. government designated 14 individuals while Malaysia submitted a list of 10 terrorist funders directly to the United Nations. However, of those 24 individuals, nine had already been arrested, while none of the others are expected to have significant assets.³² The list included none of the dubious charities and known front companies.

Saudi charities remain very active in the region, despite considerable evidence that they have directed funds to JI and its paramilitary arms.³³ They, like their domestic counterparts, are maintaining a lower profile, but in part that is due to the fact that there is less overt sectarian conflict. Significantly, charities are the primary vehicle for the deeply troubling

spread of Wahhabism throughout the region. The banking sectors remain weak and under-regulated, especially the Islamic banking sectors. Even states that are threatened by terrorism either question the utility of going after terrorist funding or fear the adverse effect that such measures will have on their economies.

II. JI REACHES OUT

Between 1999 and 2000, JI held a series of three meetings that included members of other small and radical Muslim groups from around the region, including Thai and Bangladeshi organizations. This conference was known as the Rabitatul Mujiheddin.³⁴ There is significant evidence that JI cadres are using southeastern Bangladesh to regroup and there are close ties between Fazlul Rahman's Rohingya Solidarity Organization (HUJI) and JI. Bangladesh has not been a focus of counterterrorism efforts and there has been an appalling lack of transparency on the part of the Bangladeshi government, whose mantra sounds eerily like the one that emanated from Jakarta prior to the Bali attacks.

The May through August 2003 arrests in Thailand and Cambodia further highlight the penetration of societies that were thought to be reasonably immune to Islamic radicalism. Thailand and Cambodia became important staging grounds, but also very important financial conduits. The arrests of 19 members of a terrorist cell in Pakistan—a group led by Hambali's brother—in September 2003 are also indicative of how JI has developed its network overseas and how it uses foreign territory to regroup and rebuild.³⁵

12. POLITICAL WILL

Southeast Asia is facing a seminal period in politics; during late 2003 and 2004, parliamentary and presidential elections will occur in Indonesia and Thailand, a presidential election will take place in the Philippines, and the first leadership transition in Malaysia in 23 years will occur. The war on terrorism will be a major campaign issue in all of these countries. Secular nationalists are all vulnerable to charges of being lackeys of the Americans. The current underlying economic conditions in the region are beneficial to the Islamic parties who argue that globalization has led to the impoverishment of their country and especially the *bumiputera/pribumi* community.

There is also a lack of political will to take on the Islamists or expend the political capital to challenge them on small issues. For example, in Malaysia the ruling party United Malay National Organization (UMNO) has become increasingly Islamic to court the Muslim electorate and win them back from the Islamic opposition party Parti SeIslam Malaysia (PAS). In Indonesia, although the Jakarta Charta failed, there is an Islamic component to more than 20 bills in parliament,

to which no party is willing to stand up. The Islamist Vice President Hamzah Haz was to open the Mujahideen Council of Indonesia (MMI) congress, despite the fact that many MMI leaders have either been arrested for terrorist activities or linked to JI. It was only the Jakarta bombing that forced him not to attend.

In Indonesia, JI still has not been designated a terrorist organization and under the Indonesian legal system, there are no conspiracy laws. Despite the arrest of one JI suspect in conjunction with the arrests in Semarang, he was released for "lack of evidence."³⁶ Indonesian officials fear a political backlash if they designate JI as a terrorist organization as proponents want the MMI desig-

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nated as one as well. One must also consider what effect the acquittal of Ba'asyir on terrorism charges will have on the Islamists in Indonesia. If anything, it will motivate them and vindicate their position that Ba'asyir was arrested on politically motivated charges under intense pressure from

the United States. The previously mentioned Pew poll found that there is considerable support for Islam's political role in Indonesia: 86 percent of respondents agreed that currently Islam plays a large role in Indonesian politics, while 82 percent agreed that Islam should play a role in politics.³⁷

We have to be prepared that some states no longer have the incentive to continue the war on terrorism. Thailand seems already to be in "denial mode" following the arrest of Hambali. This is the U.S. war on terrorism, not necessarily theirs. In some cases they do not have the resources to maintain the current pace in the fight against militants; in other cases they are hampered by intense bureaucratic competition.

I should briefly mention some of the key electoral issues as they pertain to the war on terrorism. In Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai Party, although almost guaranteed to be returned to power, wants to deal the Democratic Party a crushing defeat. The Democratic Party's regional stronghold is in the Muslim-dominated south, which limits the degree to which Thaksin will allow the war on terrorism to be conducted.

In the Philippines, President Arroyo broke her December 30, 2002, vow not to run for reelection, despite her eligibility to run for her own full six-year term. She made the decision for a number of reasons, but most importantly she stated that she wanted to focus on making hard choices that, though politically unpopular, would benefit the economy. Her popularity ratings were also quite low at the time. Hovering around 15 percent, though not an unprecedented level in Philippine politics, it was enough to give her pause. She has a lot of pride and could not countenance an election in which she would be humiliated. Yet since then, her position in the polls has risen steadily, while no other candidate has yet

captured the imagination of Filipino voters. The party system in the Philippines is quite weak; parties are mere vehicles for personalities, and thus it is hard to have nationwide appeal. Regardless, it will be difficult for Arroyo to make concessions with the MILF and a durable peace is unlikely. There are concerns that now-resigned Secretary of National Defense Angelo Reyes is a potential presidential candidate. There are also attempts by the opposition parties to form a broad coalition, though that seems unlikely to succeed as the parties will likely clash regarding the presidential nominee.

With the retirement of Prime Minister Mahathir on October 31, 2003, Malaysia will experience its first leadership transition in over 30 years. His heir-apparent Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi is a much less charismatic figure and has a much weaker political base. Although Badawi is a capable man who will continue to maintain the hard line on militants that he has shown while Home Minister, he will be a weaker leader who will have to bargain more with political rivals. There will be more dissent and factionalism in the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition. Although the deputy prime ministers have pledged to support Badawi, this is not a certainty, and it is the first time in 23 years that there has been an opening at the top. Although Badawi has Islamic credentials as the current Home Minister, he ordered the detainment of all JI and Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM) suspects.

In Indonesia it is really too early to make any predictions. The new constitutional reforms allow for a direct election of the president, some three months after the parliamentary elections in April. Parties that win at least three percent of the vote will be allowed to field candidates. Potential coalitions are being negotiated. Golkar, the second largest party, is clearly in a much stronger position than in the 1999 election and is fielding a number of candidates; it also has the strongest grassroots network across the archipelago. Its decision not to nominate its candidate until after the April 2004 parliamentary election is a smart one, as it allows four to five candidates to constantly tour the archipelago and drum up grassroots support. The strong field of Golkar candidates is troubling to President Megawati, and it also has grave implications for how the war on terrorism is being conducted. Megawati no longer has the cache of being an outsider, and her party, the PDI-P, is riddled with allegations of egregious corruption and factionalism. This is her election to lose, which she will, unless she can form a durable coalition with the National Awakening Party and the Nahdlatul Ulama. It is telling that Megawati did not meet with Australian Prime Minister John Howard when he came to commemorate the first anniversary of the Bali attacks.

*[S]ome states no longer
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on terrorism.*

Of immediate concern is the question of how well the Islamic-based parties will fare in 2004. There is no consensus at present. While some people see a natural and inevitable swing to the Muslims, a slight majority expect that they will poll roughly at the same rates as they did in 1999. However, this has more to do

Of immediate concern is the question of how well the Islamic-based parties will fare in 2004.

with their inherent weaknesses than their ideological appeal. Some pockets of Islamic party strength exist, but they are not seen on a national level. The Islamic parties are riddled with factionalism and rivalries and have trouble working together. The Crescent and Star Party has a very weak organizational structure and has more or less split into two

factions. The only Muslim party that stands to gain from the election is the Justice Party, which is a very un-Indonesian party. Although it was courted by the government, it has turned down ministerships, preferring to remain in opposition, to maintain its integrity. The Justice Party is by far the cleanest party in Indonesia and ministers have a good reputation for eschewing graft. Moreover, it has a strong party organization and can assemble huge numbers of people. Most importantly, there are no discernable factions within the party.

JI'S VULNERABILITIES

In conclusion, I should briefly outline some of JI's vulnerabilities. First, we have a much better understanding of how JI operates and communicates. Those who have been arrested have been forthcoming in their interrogations, which have greatly assisted ongoing investigations. Many of the detainees have cooperated and revealed a significant amount of information about the scope and modus operandi of the organization. The quality of new members may decline as they have not been as thoroughly trained.

JI has made many mistakes, both in terms of its own internal security and in terms of its targeting to remain an effective terrorist organization

Second, inter-state cooperation has improved dramatically, though it began from a very low level. The instances of joint operations are no longer the exceptions. States are cooperating with one another more regarding the handing-over of suspects (recently Hambali's wife was turned over by Thai officials to Malaysia, while Malaysia may turn over Abu Jibril to Indonesia). There has been some momentum in getting each state to

amend its existing laws to bring them in line with those of other states. There still, however, has been no interest in developing an ASEAN extradition treaty.

Third, JI has made many mistakes, both in terms of its own internal security and in terms of its targeting to remain an effective terrorist organization. At the same time, although JI has suffered severe setbacks in the past year and a half, it has the potential to cause inordinate economic damage and political instability in the coming years. Finally, JI's ongoing attraction as an organization may be questionable given it is solely based on a vitriolic hatred of the West and a desire for revenge, rather than standing for something clear and tangible. ■

NOTES

- 1 Simon Elegant, "The Terrorist Talks," *Time Asia*, October 5, 2003.
- 2 For an excellent overview of the literature, see Rex Hudson, *The Psychology and Sociology of Terrorism* (Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 2000), available online at <<http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Sociology-Psychology%20of%20Terrorism.htm>>; also see the articles by Marsha Crenshaw and Jerrold M. Post, in Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies States of Mind* (Princeton: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998).
- 3 In his trial, Ali Imron stated that the attack was un-Islamic: "First, the target was not clear. In jihad, the target must be clear, meaning that we should have authentic evidence of the target that they really hate Islam. Second, there was no warning before the attack, but in *jihad* it is necessary to give warning or give proselytizing before doing the attack. Third, killing women. In *jihad*, we are not allowed to kill women, except those who join the war [against Islam]... As a normal human being who has many weaknesses and made mistakes, I also want the prosecutor to give me the lightest punishment. But, on the other side, my heart is not strong when I remember the tragedy is very tragic and my mistake is very big." Cited in Wayne Miller, "It Was a Mistake: Bali Bomber," *The Age*, September 16, 2003; "Repentant Bali Bomber Gets Life Sentence," *Reuters*, September 18, 2003.
- 4 Simon Elegant, *op. cit.*
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Available at <<http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/trainingmanual.htm>> (accessed November 16, 2003).
- 7 Pedoman Umum Perjuangan Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyyah (PUPJI) (Unpublished document, dated May 30, 1996), 10.
- 8 Simon Elegant, *op. cit.*
- 9 Al-Qaeda Training manual, *ibid.*, IX (28.7).
- 10 For an excellent analysis of this, see Elena Pavlova, "An Ideological Response to Islamist Terrorism: Theoretical and Operational Overview," in Rohan Gunaratna ed., *Terrorism in the Asia Pacific: Threat and Response* (Singapore: Eastern University Press, 2003), 30-46.
- 11 The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Global Attitudes Survey, *Views of a Changing World* (June 2003). One of the most surprising results, showing a growing degree of Islamic conservatism was the figure that only 22 percent of Indonesians felt that women should be permitted to work outside the home; a sentiment that was shared closely by both men (20 percent) and women (24 percent), 42-43. There is a sense that religion should be a personal issue, rather than a state imposed one: 86 percent of Indonesians believed that the decision to wear a hijub—headscarf—should be made by women themselves; only 14 percent believed that it should be a legal policy, 44. With regards to madrasas, 92 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that religious schools should focus less on religious education and 99 percent of the respondents believed that it was necessary to believe in God in order to be moral.
- 12 Most believed that the United States favored the Israelis to the detriment of Palestinians and 58 percent of Indonesians polled believed that there was no way Israeli and Palestinian states could exist side by side. Pew Global Attitudes Survey, 5.
- 13 Pew Global Attitudes Survey, 46.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 19.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 28.
- 17 Interview with a senior Australian Federal Police official, Jakarta, June 9, 2003.
- 18 "Pakistan Rounds Up Hambali's Brother, Terrorist Suspects," *Associated Press*, September 22, 2003; "Indonesian Held in Karachi is Hamabali's Brother," *Reuters*, September 22, 2003.
- 19 Interview with Eid Kabalu, MILF Spokesman, Cotabato, January 9, 2002.

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- 20 Simon Elegant, "The Terrorist Talks," *Time Asia*, October 5, 2003.
 - 21 Dong Sarmiento, "MILF Asserts Right to Rehab Funds" in *Mindaneews.com*, August 21, 2003.
 - 22 "Al Qaeda Tapes Prompt FBI Warning," *CBSNEWS.com*, Oct. 10, 2002 <<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/10/09/attack/main525008.shtml>> (accessed November 24, 2003).
 - 23 Simon Elegant, "Jakarta Bombing," *Time Asia*, August 11, 2003; also Australian Broadcast Corporation, "Indonesian Police Reveal Marriott Was on Target List," August 7, 2003.
 - 24 Simon Elegant, op. cit.
 - 25 Interview with a senior Australian Federal Police official, Jakarta, June 9, 2003.
 - 26 Ellen Nakashima and Alan Sipress, "Southeast Asia's New Corps of Suicide Bombers," *Washington Post*, August 16, 2003.
 - 27 Sidney Jones, "Jemaah Islamiyah in SouthEast Asia: Damanged but Still Dangerous," International Crisis Group Asia Report 63, August 26, 2003 <<http://www.intl-crisis-group.org/home/index.cfm?id=1452&l=1>> (accessed November 24, 2003).
 - 28 Eddie Chua, "Poison Gas Link to J.I.," *Malay Mail*, July 12, 2003.
 - 29 Personal interview with Indonesian National Police official in Jakarta, July 24, 2003.
 - 30 Jane MacCartney and Simon Cameron-Moore, "US to Freeze 'Terror' Funds in SE Asia-sources," Reuters, March 13, 2003. AFP, "FBI Watching al-Qaeda Funds in Southeast Asia," *Financial Times*, March 31, 2003.
 - 31 Department of the Treasury, Office of Public Affairs, "Snow Announces Designation of 10 Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorists," Press Release, September 5, 2003.
 - 32 The designations have four ostensible purposes. First, to freeze assets so that they cannot be used to perpetrate terrorist acts. Second, in addition to freezing the assets, such a designation also means that it is illegal for citizens of any UN member country from having financial transactions with these entities or individuals. It criminalizes the act of doing business with the designees so, for example, if a certain charity in Indonesia was designated, then it would be a crime for people in the United States to make donations to it. It is, if nothing else, an attempt to isolate them. Third, the designations give law enforcement officials another tool to use to disrupt terrorist cells. For example, in Indonesia where Jemaah Islamiya has not been outlawed as an organization, the designation of Imam Samudra is very important. If investigators can prove that someone had a financial transaction with Samudra, then the individual committed a crime and a case can be opened. This law applies across borders, so that a Thai citizen would also be guilty of committing a crime if he had a financial dealing with Samudra. Finally, designations serve as a deterrent and force terrorist organizations to constantly shift their financial mechanisms.
 - 33 For more on the financial aspects of JI, see Zachary Abuza, *Funding Terrorism in Southeast Asia: The Financial Network of al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiya*, National Bureau for Asian Research (December 2003).
 - 34 Interrogation report of Faiz Bin Abu Bakar Bafana (Singapore, no date).
 - 35 "Pakistan Rounds Up Hambali's Brother, Terrorist Suspects," *Associated Press*, September 22, 2003; "Indonesian Held in Karachi is Hamabali's Brother," *Reuters*, September 22, 2003.
 - 36 Tomi Leborg and Sohirin, "The Deadly Laboratory," *Tempo*, July 28 2003, 15.
 - 37 However, there was less consensus over the political role that religious leaders should play: while 51 percent argued that religious leaders should play a larger role in politics, 48 percent disagreed. Pew Global Attitudes Survey, 34-35, 44.
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