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The recent spate of terrorist attacks in Indonesia, the continuing battle between the military and IS-remnants in southern Philippines, and the thwarting of over one dozen attacks in Malaysia, underscore the continuous terrorist threat from the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group and its worldwide affiliates and associates. This also means that while IS is presently weak at the centre (Levant), it is stronger at the periphery (wilayat or governorates). These attacks are consistent with IS strategy of spreading terror and mayhem during the Islamic month of Ramadan, using its worldwide networks of supporters and sympathisers.

Operationally, IS has privatised and urbanised the global terrorist threat to maximise the impact of terrorist attacks and minimise the losses and costs. This is exemplified by the use of families and individuals as perpetrators of terrorist attacks which prevents early detection and fuels the group's online propaganda. The families involved in the multiple attacks in Indonesia — Church bombing and motorcycle-borne twin suicide attacks on a police check post in Surabaya followed by a sword-and-suicide attack in Pekanbaru, Sumatra on regional police headquarters — belonged to the IS-linked militant group Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) which was designated a terrorist group by the US State Department in January 2017.

The trend of using radicalised families for terrorist attacks is not entirely new. In a recent article, eminent Southeast Asia terrorism expert, Sidney Jones has noted, "IS has always been a family affair where women are the lionesses and children are the cubs of [so-called] Caliphate." In retrospect, the Paris and San Bernardino attacks in late 2015 were carried out by two brothers (Abdeslam brothers) and a husband-wife-team (Tashfeen Malik and Syed Rizwan Farook) respectively. Similarly, the Charlie Hebdo attack in October 2015 was carried out by two brothers, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi. Likewise, the Boston marathon bombing in 2013 was also the work of two Chechen brothers, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and Tamerlan Tsarnaev. Given such familial links, in addition to the search for individual factors for radicalisation, the academic community should also look into kinship and peer-to-peer factors in radicalisation where family members and friends can transpose extremist ideas on an individual, bypassing several stages of radicalisation and motivating them to act out of love, loyalty and trust.

The other dimension of these attacks is the urbanisation of terrorist attacks which has been the main feature of global terrorism since 9/11. Cities are not just the targets but also incubators and sanctuaries for terrorist groups. Moreover, attacks in cities are high-impact and generate a lot of 'favourable' propaganda for terrorists. Terrorism is propaganda by the deed and by targeting police check posts, places of worships, shopping malls, pedestrians and other public places, IS is gaining 'revenge' and making up for the territorial losses in Iraq and Syria. By doing so, it is forcing the home countries to '[over] react' with strict counter-terrorism policies which in turn breeds resentment and fuels more violence It also gives more publicity to IS and creates the impression that despite heavy losses the group remains strong and retains

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its global outreach. Moreover, in its propaganda literature, IS glorifies these attackers as martyrs, heroes and icons to encourage others to emulate similar tactics.

In this issue, two feature articles, discuss different aspects of the terrorist threat in Indonesia, the recent spate of attacks, including the prison siege and the motivations of the JAD detainees. In addition, they also trace the evolution of the terrorist threat in the country from being Jemaah Islamiyah dominated to 'Islamic State' focused. The articles titled, **The Terrorist Threat in Indonesia: From Jemaah Islamiyah to the 'Islamic State'** and **Jamaah Ansharud Daulah and the Terrorist Threat in Indonesia** argue for greater cooperation and collaboration between Southeast Asian states to mitigate the growing domestic terrorist threat. Considering the string of attacks perpetrated by JAD members and supporters, it is evident that IS has not been mortally wounded and has instead morphed into a stronger entity in isolated geographical centres through its affiliates. This points towards a decentralisation of the threat and a need to focus on issues such as proliferation of smaller IS-linked networks and cells, family-based radicalisation and the involvement of children in terrorism.

Another dimension of IS growing strength in the periphery is the issue of returning Terrorist Foreign Fighters (FTFs) who pose a clear and present danger to the security of several countries. This has generated an academic and policy debate on how to deal with returning FTFs. The problem is further compounded by the lack of credible data on FTTs. Against this backdrop, **Sylvene See's** article sheds light on areas where returning FTFs could leverage strongly-knit pockets of domestic support in various countries to conduct attacks. They could also serve as catalysts for recidivism or reactivation of disengaged terrorists, by playing the role of recruiters, propagandists and trainers. According to the author, these developments could increase the risk of disengaged terrorists re-engaging with their former networks and activities, in comparison to de-radicalised terrorists.

Lastly, **Nodirbek Soliev** focuses on the surge of IS online propaganda threatening attacks on the upcoming World Cup event in Russia from June to July 2018. Russian authorities have stepped up counter-terrorism efforts to thwart attacks targeting civilians, public transportation systems and other locations during and in the run up to the event. The author states that the terrorist threat in Russia could come from three major categories. First, IS' Wilayah Qawqaz in the North Caucasus has conducted multiple suicide bombings and knife attacks, indicating the group's ability and intention to target the event. Second, in April 2017, Al-Qaeda-affiliated militants claimed their first attack in Russia, suggesting that Al-Qaeda could seek competition with IS' local affiliate in the North Caucasus. Lastly, the radicalisation of segments of the Central Asian diaspora highlights the possibility of small-scale lone-wolf attacks targeting the event. It remains critical for Russia to ensure security during the event and maintain local support for involvement in the Syrian civil war.

The Terrorist Threat in Indonesia: From Jemaah Islamiyah to 'Islamic State'

The Islamic State (IS) terrorist group has continued its expansion strategy into different parts of the globe after losing major territorial strongholds in Iraq and Syria. As such, IS' wilayat (governorates), affiliated groups, networks and cells present a long term threat to the West, Caucasus, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. In Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population globally, the threat of IS is increasing steadily. It has spread from Maluku to Sumatra despite efforts by Detachment 88 (D88) to arrest those perpetrating attacks. Indonesian law, until recently, precluded the arrest of ideologues, propagandists, recruiters, operators and ordinary members of terrorist groups until they plot an attack or perpetrate one. To understand the IS threat in Indonesia, it is necessary to study the evolution of the earlier terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) to Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD), which has emerged as the most active and lethal terrorist group in Indonesia today.

Creation of Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD)

JAD's reach and ability to perpetrate attacks lies in the group's decentralised structure in comparison to JI's hierarchical and bureaucratic organisation. JAD also has links to IS in Syria, with several key members operating from outside Indonesia.

The history of radical Islamism in Indonesia can be traced to 1942 when Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosoewirjo led a movement called Darul Islam (Islamic state) or Negara Islam Indonesia (Islamic State of Indonesia) that was focusing on establishing an Islamic state from 1949 to 1962. Later in 1993, there was an internal split and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) was founded by Abdullah Sungkar and his assistant Abu Bakr Bashir. DI and later JI had received training from Al-Qaeda and its predecessor Maktab Khadamat al-Mujahidin al-Arab (MaK) in Pakistan and Afghanistan during and after the anti-Soviet Afghan mujahidin campaign (1979-1989).

After the 2002 Bali suicide attacks that killed 202 people, JI transformed into Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI). MMI was initially formed in 2000, but JI was absorbed into the organisation after the Bali bombings. In July 2008, differences between MMI leaders, Irfan Awaas and Bashir, led the latter to split and create Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT). Later, Bashir joined radical cleric Aman Abdurrahman in prison to create the IS-linked Jamaah Ansharut Dawlah (JAD), the most powerful IS group in Indonesia. Before November 2015, JAD was known as Jamaah Ansharul Khilafah Indonesia. Aman remained heavily influenced by Abu Mohamed al Maqdisi, the ideologue of Abu Musab al Zarqawi, the founding father of IS' forerunner.

Aman had united several pro-IS groups while he was in prison. The two major organisations that formed the membership of JAD included students from Tawhid Wal Jihad and Forum Aktivis Syariat Islam (FAKSI: Forum of Activists for Islamic Sharia) led by M. Fachry. Hari Budiman alias Abu Musa was responsible for organising the student groups mentored by Aman to create the JAD. Abu Musa's successor Zainal Anshori was appointed as the JAD leader in November 2015. After Zainal was arrested, he was succeeded by Abu Qutaibah, who was appointed in May 2017.

Even though Aman is recognised as an ideologue, he was also trained in combat skills and bomb making by Saiful Muhtorir alias Abu Gar, who was later appointed as the head of JAD's military wing and the chief of the Ambon Branch.

Aman, 46, is now facing trial for allegedly inciting others to execute various terrorist attacks in 2016 and 2017, starting with the Jakarta attacks in January 2016 that resulted in the deaths of 4 people and 4 terrorists.

Other violent incidents were the Samarinda (East Kalimantan) church bombing, Kampung Melayu (Jakarta) suicide bombing, the Medan (Sumatra) police-post attack and the Bima (West Nusa Tenggara) police shootings. A total of 11 people were killed, including five terrorists in these attacks.

Aman has been convicted twice before. In 2004, he was found guilty of organizing a bomb-making class and sentenced to seven years in prison. After his early release for good behavior, he helped fund a joint terrorist training camp in Aceh and was sentenced to 9 years jail in 2010.[1]

The 2016-2017 terrorist attacks across Indonesia and the recent Jakarta-Surabaya-Pekanbaru incidents signify JAD's far reaching influence. Currently, JAD has an active presence in 18 out of 34 provinces in Indonesia and strong operational capabilities. It is evident that since 2014 when the so-called Islamic State (IS) was established in Iraq and Syria, the Al-Qaeda centric threat landscape that dominated Indonesia has been supplanted by an IS centric threat landscape. To counter this development, the Indonesian authorities have conducted multiple counter-terrorism operations, arresting the leading JAD directing figures and operatives. Many of its leaders are now behind bars including Aman and his deputy Iwan Darmawan. Iwan, also known as Rois, is on death row for his involvement in the Australian Embassy bombing in Jakarta in 2004. Others in prison include Zainal Anshori, Abu Qutaibah and Abu Gar. Despite police crackdowns and incarceration of JAD leaders, JAD has been able to launch terrorist attacks as seen in the recent violent incidents in Surabaya. Unlike JI, JAD has a loose chain of command where the members receive general direction and guidance, and fighters organise attacks freely.[2]

JAD's evolution from Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) to an IS-linked group highlights the long term nature of the terrorist threat in Indonesia. From the church bombings in 2000 and Bali attacks in 2002 to the hotel bombings in 2009, JI has now adopted a tactical non-violent approach; this has led violent elements within the organisation to align themselves with IS and IS-linked organisations. In the future, despite IS' evident weakness and loss of territory, affiliated groups will morph into stronger decentralised entities, with smaller cells, managing to evade detection by law enforcement agencies and perpetrate small-scale or large-scale terrorist attacks.

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[1] David Lipson, Aman Abdurrahman: Is this Indonesia's most dangerous man? May 31, 2018. www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-31/aman-abdurrahamn-indonesias-most-dangerous-an/9817546.

[2] Kharishar Kahfi, Police nab JAD E. Java leader Abu Umar, The Jakarta Post, May 17, 2018. https://www.google.com.sg/amp/www.thejakartapost.com/amp/news/2018/05/17/police-nab-jad-e-java-leader-abu-umar.html.

Jamaah Ansharud Daulah and the Terrorist Threat in Indonesia

Between 8 May and 16 May, Indonesia experienced a wave of terrorist attacks that were perpetrated by Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD), the Indonesian branch of the so-called Islamic State (IS). JAD conducted or planned six different attacks in less than a month in different parts of the country. These attacks included a 36-hour standoff that began on 8 May in Kelapa Dua, Depok near Jakarta; the stabbing of a police officer at the Mobile Intelligence Unit in Depok on 10 May; three near simultaneous church bombings and a failed bombing in Surabaya on 13 May; a police HQ suicide attack in Surabaya on 14 May; and a knife attack, a vehicle ramming attack on a police officer, and a failed suicide bombing on 16 May at the Riau police HQ in Pekanbaru.

Introduction

As the support and operational infrastructure of IS is still intact, there is a need to shift from counter-terrorism cooperation to collaboration to prevent further attacks in the country. According to estimates, Indonesia has thousands of IS supporters, and several hundred operatives, with many having links to 60 Southeast Asian terrorist groups that have pledged allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi since 2014. At least 1490 are reported to have joined IS or left Indonesia to join the group in Syria; more than 600 of them are said to have returned or were deported.[1] Indonesia, which has suffered attacks periodically since 2000, needs to work closely with regional governments in order to contain, isolate and eliminate the IS threat.

This article traces the six attacks that were perpetrated by JAD/IS-linked terrorists in the span of a week in Indonesia. These attacks highlight certain discernible trends regarding the nature of the terrorist threat in Indonesia. First, the prison siege indicates the ability of IS-linked terrorists to target a highly guarded detention centre from within, underlining the need for better controls in prison. Second, the suicide bombings conducted by families linked to IS suggest that radicalisation has become a 'collectivist' phenomenon that is increasingly bringing women and children to the fold as well. Lastly, the smaller knife attacks replicate lone-wolf incidents as seen in parts of Europe, representing a decentralisation of the terrorist threat, and a shift from sophisticated large-scale attacks that required detailed planning and powerful firearms.

The Siege of the Detention Center

On 8 May, terrorist detainees and convicts took control of the National Police Mobile Brigade (Mako Brimob) Detention Center in Kelapa Dua, Depok (West Java) for over 36 hours. The Centre housed 155 men and women and one minor. The facility included several key members of the JAD leadership such as Abu Qutaibah, Anggi Indah Kusama (who led the IS propaganda network out of Hong Kong) and Young Farmer (the would-be dirty bomber to Anggi). The siege started when Wawan Kurniawan alias Abu Affif incited other inmates to break free when his demands over food were not met. It was a spontaneous outbreak which was exploited by IS elements in the prison.

More than six JAD inmates managed to break their cells open and attacked D88 officers some of whom managed to escape with the support of a few inmates. The inmates also managed to access an armory and seize 26 firearms, including a general-purpose machine gun and 300 rounds of ammunition. They killed five D88 investigators and held one as hostage to deter a rescue operation.

The terrorist inmates tried to stir up support from IS members and sympathisers by circulating 'Bai'ah to Abu Bakr Baghdadi'

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[1] Francis Chan, "Surabaya attacks: 37 arrested and 4 suspects killed, say top cop", The Straits Times, 2 June 2018,

https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/surabaya-attacks-37-arrested-and-4-suspects-killed-says-top-cop.

using their mobile phones and distributing them on IS Telegram Channels during the incident. "Selamat Dunia Akhirat" (Stay Safe in this world and the Hereafter), "Al-Hujaraat, Ganti President" (Change the President) and other IS telegram channels posted images of inmates with their faces covered, armed with weapons against the backdrop of an IS flag. Other pictures posted showed injured inmates receiving treatment and other inmates assembling weapons. A video posted online focused on an inmate who had died of his injuries.[2]

JAD members also began discussing plans of attacking the Provost building of Brimob to free their leader Aman Abdurrahman who was held in isolation in a nearby location within the Brimob complex. In response, the police ordered a lockdown of the facility and tight control of the traffic outside. The publicity of the siege prompted several terrorists and supporters to travel to Mako Brimob. However, D88 disrupted their plans by intercepting their car heading to Bekasi, after which the authorities killed two and injured two other terrorists during an ambush in the Bekasi regency.[3]

Fake news inciting IS supporters revealed that 14 D88 officers were killed and 10 vehicles of IS fighters with Molotov cocktails were approaching Mako Brimob. A video released by Amaq News Agency showed five D88 officers lying dead and ended with an inmate trampling on the head of a D88 officer.

IS' Indonesian leadership in Syria also tried to exploit the incident by directing the hardcore group of JAD leaders and members to follow the classic IS attack strategy with four phases: (i) attack - slaughtering phase (five D88 officers killed, 3 injured), (ii) take control (one hostage); (iii) publicity or propaganda phase (usage of Telegram, Facebook and other platforms); (iv) and show-down (martyrdom or killing phase).

To prevent large-scale violence and heavy casualties, more than 800 Brimob personnel were ordered to surround the building but not to attack it; the supply of food and power was cut off to wear down the inmates. A dialogue was initiated with Aman Abdurrahman to prevent further violence. After initially refusing, Aman agreed to record a statement calling for an end to the siege. The recording was sent to the inmates who, after further negotiations, started to surrender. They were transferred to Nusa Kambangan prison complex where the most radicalised inmates are placed in isolation.

The siege showed that hardcore inmates guided by IS ideology instigated the other inmates to fight. However, many remained reluctant due to their rapport with D88 personnel and Aman's fatwa (religious decree). Others also feared retaliation from D88 and Brimob personnel because a small number of detainees and convicts had killed the D88 officers. Nonetheless, they agreed that it was in their best interest to end the siege peacefully.

Subsequent Spate of Attacks by JAD

Shooting Incident in Surabaya

On 10 May, Tendi Sumarno, stabbed Chief Brig. Marhum Prencje of the Mobile Intelligence (IntelMob) unit, before he was shot by a policeman. The incident was triggered at the Bhayangkara Police Hospital where Marhum had arrested Tendi who was acting suspiciously outside the hospital premises. Two police officers had helped Marhum to arrest Tendi and bring him to the IntelMob police station. Tendi was carrying a hidden knife and stabbed Marhum, after which he was shot. According to D88 investigators, Tendi had joined JAD and used Telegram and WhatsApp to support IS and circulate related propaganda.

Suicide Bombings in Surabaya

In Indonesia, the first incident of a female suicide bomber planning an attack occurred in December 2016 when Dian Yulia Novi intended to target the Presidential Palace in Jakarta to support IS.[4] Novi had received

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[2] When Abu Ibrahim was arrested, he was planning to conduct a bomb attack and recruited suicide attackers.

[3] Adi Warsono, Police Shoot Suspected Terrorists En Route to Mako Brimob, Tempo.co, May 11, 2018.

https://en.tempo.co/read/news/2018/05/11/064918356/Police-Shoot-Suspected-Terrorists-En-Route-to-Mako-Brimob.

[4] Charlie Campbell, ISIS Unveiled: The Story Behind Indonesia's First Female Suicide Bomber, Time, March 8, 2017.

support from IS members in Indonesian prisons starting January 2016. Later, Dita Oepriarto, Tri Murtiono and Anton Ferdiantono had indoctrinated their own families to stage three attacks. The mentor of these three families was Zaid Kholid Abu Bakar, a JI member who had joined JAD and was deported from Turkey along with his family while trying to join IS. Zaid was in the Ministry of Social Affairs shelter for rehabilitation purposes, but remained committed to IS ideology.[5]

The three families that perpetrated the attacks in Surabaya held regular religious study sessions, watched IS videos glorifying violence and death, home-schooled their children and kept them away from Christians and Hindus. Reports indicate that the three families intended to serve God and be rewarded for killing disbelievers or non-Muslims.

On 13 May, the JAD leader for Surabaya, Oepriarto, drove his wife Puji Kuswati a nurse, and their two daughters to St Maria Catholic Church at Ngagel Madya Street where they detonated a bomb. Oepriarto then drove to the Pentecostal Central Church at Arjuno Street where he detonated another bomb. Their two teenage sons, aged 16 and 18, drove motorcycles to the Santa Maria Catholic Church at Diponegoro Street, where they detonated explosives at the gate when a security volunteer prevented their entry. This spate of near simultaneous attacks killed 13 and injured 41 others.

On the same day, another bomb exploded prematurely in the Wonocolo apartments, a suburb of Surabaya. Anton Febrianto, his wife Puspitasari and their daughter, were killed in the explosion. Certain false reports alleged that Febrianto threatened to detonate explosives during a raid after which D88 personnel shot him. However, Febrianto was killed before D88 arrived at the location.

On 14 May, a third family staged a suicide attack on the police HQ in Surabaya with Tri Murtiono, his wife, Tri Ernawati, and their three children. When the explosives were detonated the whole family was killed, except for the daughter. After the attack, the police recovered 54 pipe bombs in 27 containers at the family's residence.

IS claimed both attacks other than the accidental explosion. The suicide attacks conducted by families had higher visibility due to the shock value of bombings perpetrated by women and children.[6]

After the declaration of IS' caliphate in 2014, families from Indonesia had traveled to Iraq and Syria. Family-based radicalisation highlights a long-term threat as children are expected to represent and propagate the ideology of the terrorist organisation. Broadly, the Surabaya attacks demonstrate critical developments in the radicalisation process and activities of IS terrorists. First, the radicalisation of families is a natural progression of self-radicalisation of individuals. When an individual is radicalised through the cyber or physical space, he or she makes attempts to influence family members. Second, despite gendered perceptions of men encouraging participation in terrorism, these attacks highlight that women can also radicalise their family members and encourage participation in terrorism. If parents are radicalised, they make attempts to influence their children as well. Third, in cases where families are radicalised, the breadwinners also focus on raising funds and engaging in supportive activity, such as manufacturing of homemade explosives. Overall, the radicalisation and recruitment of entire families, who perpetrate attacks in a group, is a key trend that highlights a need to counter IS ideology.

Riau Police Headquarters Attack

The multiple suicide bombings in Surabaya were followed by an attack in Sumatra where

https://www.google.com.sg/amp/amp.timeinc.net/time/4689714/indonesia-isis-terrorism-jihad-extremism-dian-yulia-novi-fpi.
[5] Kate Lamb, The bombers next door: how an Indonesian family turned into suicide attackers, Guardian, 19 May 2018. https://www.google.com.sg/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/19/indonesia-blasts-

surabaya-family-from-good-neighbours-suicide-bombers.
[6] Surabaya residents protest suicide bomber burials, Channel News Asia, May 18, 2018, https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/surabaya-residents-protest-suicide-bomber-burials-10248176.

five terrorists conducted a vehicle ramming, knife and a suicide bomb attack that was claimed by IS' Amaq News Agency. The attackers were members of a JAD network in Dumai, north of Pekanbaru. On 16 May, the terrorists attacked the Riau Regional Police headquarters in a mini-van using swords. One of the attackers wore a suicide belt and one attacker fled after killing one police officer and injuring four others.[7] Another attacker also fled after he killed a police officer, and injured two others and two journalists.

Conclusion

In response to the spate of terrorist attacks, Indonesia has toughened its counter-terrorism laws to enhance police powers of arrest and investigations. The law now enables the police to make pre-emptive arrests to thwart terror attacks, and to detain terror suspects longer to complete investigation. The police have also launched a massive crackdown on IS supporters suspected of being linked to the Surabaya attacks. Latest reports revealed that 82 suspects were arrested and 14 killed.[8]

The series of successful and disrupted attacks in the run up to Ramadan (17 May to 14 June 2018) underline the escalation of terrorist threat in Indonesia. During this period, IS typically has three kinds of targets - governments or security forces, Christians and Western interests. The region will have to be on higher alert during Ramadan (and after) as there are several undisrupted networks and cells in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

To contain the terrorist threat within Indonesia and the broader Southeast Asian region, a multi-pronged approach is necessary. This would include effectively tracking and dismantling IS infrastructure, even though certain IS networks in the cyber domain are invisible due to encryption. The authorities will need to focus on proper integration of social media intelligence (SOCMINT) with human intelligence (HUMINT) and encourage greater sharing between the law enforcement, national security and military agencies. The

use of dual user technology to build bombs necessitates enhanced engagement with the public and industry (industrial, agricultural, pharmaceutical) to raise awareness and develop appropriate responses. Community leaders and counter-ideology experts will need to take note of the involvement of women and children in terrorism and figure out how vulnerable families can be saved from extremist influence. Lastly, the state should continue its public education programme on the terrorist threat as public locations and economic targets remain attractive targets for terrorists.

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[7] The terrorists injured two police officers and two journalists. The terrorist who managed to escape the location was later apprehended by the authorities.

[8] Indonesia's anti-terror sweep nets 96 suspects, The Straits Times, June 6, 2018,https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesias-anti-terror-sweep-nets-96-suspects.

Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: A Catalyst for Recidivism Among Disengaged Terrorists

Sylvene See

With the eviction of the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group from Iraq and Syria, the academic discussions and policy debates over the imminent threat of returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) has intensified. The recent spate of terrorist attacks in Indonesia conducted by militants of IS-affiliated Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) highlights a critical dimension whereby returning FTFs could leverage existing strongly knit pockets of domestic support to conduct attacks. This paper posits that returning FTFs could play the role of recruiters, propagandists and trainers for future terrorist attacks and therefore serve as a catalyst for recidivism or reactivation of disengaged terrorists. These developments could increase the risk of disengaged terrorists re-connecting with their former networks and activities, in comparison to de-radicalised terrorists. To mitigate this risk, a more coherent counter-terrorism approach that covers de-radicalisation, disengagement, re-engagement and re-radicalisation should be adopted.

The Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighter Threat: Real or Exaggerated?

About 10-30 per cent of the FTFs in Syria and Iraq have returned home, according to the figures compiled by the United Nations (UN).[1] Mark Sexton estimates that about 50 per cent of British and European IS members have returned[2] while Arie Perlinger and Daniel Milton found out that as late as 2016 most FTFs from Western countries were rapidly perishing in Syria and Iraq. [3] Given the diversity of figures related to returning FTFs, the threat they could possibly pose varies from region to region and country to country. Among academics and policy-makers, there are two opposing views. One argument is that the threat of returning FTFs is overhyped by the media.[4] The opposing view is that returning FTFs are 'a ticking time bomb' [5] and future attacks are 'almost inevitable.[6]

The recent spate of terrorist attacks in Indonesia is testament to this. According to Indonesian Police Chief Tito Karnavian, the attacks were directed by IS central to retaliate against the arrest of radical cleric Aman Abdurrahman, mastermind of the 2016 Central Jakarta terror attack and the arrest of Zainal Ansori, head of the East Java chapter of JAD.[7] Furthermore, the three families who conducted the three attacks often gathered at the house of the main perpetrator and JAD

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[1] United Nations, "Foreign Terrorist Fighters", *Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee,* https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/foreign-terrorist-fighters/

[2] Mark Sexton, "What's In A Name? Proposing New Typologies For" Foreign Fighters", *The RUSI Journal* 162, 5(2017): 34-43

[3] Arie Perlinger and Daniel Milton, "From Cradle To Grave: The Lifecycle Of Foreign Fighters In Iraq and Syria", *Combating Terrorism Centre,* November 11, 2016, https://ctc.usma.edu/from-cradle-to-grave-the-lifecycle-of-foreign-fighters-in-iraq-and-syria/. However, their study is based on an incomplete dataset.

[4] David Byman and Jenny Shapiro, "Be Afraid. Be A Little Afraid: The Threat Of Terrorism From Western

Foreign Fighters In Syria And Iraq, *Brookings Policy Paper No. 24, November 2014, pg 28*

[5] A comment made by former French Prime Minister Manuel Valls to Foreign Policy during a small press breakfast in New York on July 2013. See Colum Lynch, " "Europe's New 'Time Bomb' is Ticking in Syria', *Foreign Policy,* July 09, 2013, http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/07/09/europes-new-time-bomb-is-ticking-in-syria/

[6] Frank Gardner, "Europe Could Feel the Backlash from Jihadist Conflicts", *BBC,* November 30, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world- middle-east-25155188.

[7] Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja, "Surabaya Police HQ Attack: Family Of Five, Including 8 Year-Old Child, Carried Out Suicide Bombing", *The Straits Times,* May 14, 2018, https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/explosion-at-surabaya-police-headquarters

leader for the Surabaya district[8], Dita Oepriarto, to learn how to make bombs.[9] These attacks illustrate how returning FTFs can leverage on these pockets of support to enhance and complicate local and global threat landscapes.[10] Against this backdrop, it is imperative to examine the extent and nature of the threat they pose in order to formulate informed and tailored policy frameworks. As there is no one-size-fit-all response to mitigate the threat of returning FTFs, contextualised multi-pronged and multi-sectoral responses are needed.

By reflecting on the synergy of the 'veteran effect' of the returning FTFs that flows through both its offline and online channels, the newly proposed model, the Pendulum Model of Reengagement (PME) illustrates the possible movement of terrorists who were previously disengaged to turn towards re-engagement and re-radicalisation. With lowered activation energy, it is argued that the returning FTFs would serve as catalysts for recidivism amongst disengaged terrorists.

With the threat of returning FTFs, this research attempts to fill the gap between radicalisation and de-radicalisation and delves further into re-radicalisation. The process of rehabilitated detainees (jihadists) acting as catalysts is an emerging and unexplored pathway that returning FTFs could adopt. With the increasing risk of returning FTFs serving as catalysts for recidivism among disengaged terrorists, authorities cannot afford to settle for disengagement anymore, even though it may be a practical and achievable goal for most rehabilitation programmes.

Deconstructing the Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighter Narrative

Notwithstanding the current boom in literature on returning FTFs, the foreign fighter phenomenon is not new. In retrospect, the term was used to describe International Brigade volunteers in the Spanish Civil War (1936- 1939) and later for European mercenaries serving with Croatian forces in the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s.[11] It is estimated that there has been a total of 100,000 foreign fighters worldwide over the past 250 years. However, the usage of the FTF term has been criticised. According to Arsla Jawaid, the term received opposition for being too 'state-centric' and 'paradoxical'. Although labelled as 'foreign' while participating in conflicts in other countries[12], they pose a (perceived) risk in their 'home' countries.[13]

The UN defines FTFs as individuals who travel to a states other than their states of residence or nationality for the purpose of planning, preparation of, or participation in terrorist acts as well as providing or receiving terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict'.[14] The distinction of the roles detailed in the definition is significant because not all FTFs travel to Iraq or Syria have the intention of becoming fighters there. It is estimated that the number of girls and women constitute no less than 10 per cent of the FTFs.[15] Barring a few cases of women participating in suicide operations and acts of self-defiance, the role of women is not to fight, but to produce "cubs of the Caliphate" or act as 'cheerleaders of the

[8] "Indonesia: 'Suicide Squad' Family On Motorcycles Attacks Surabaya Police HQ After Church Bombings". *South China Morning Post,* May 14, 2018, http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/2145969/indonesia-explosion-surabaya-police-headquarters-after

[9] Safrin La Batu, "Children Involved In Surabaya Attacks Isolated From School, Society", *The Jakarta Post,* May 15, 2018, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/05/15/children-involved-in-surabaya-attacks-isolated-from-school-society.html

[10] Devianti Faridz, Euan McKirdy and Eliza Mackintosh, "Three Families Were Behind The ISIS-Inspired Bombings In Indonesia's Surabaya, Police", *CNN*, May 15, 2018, https://edition.cnn.com/2018/05/13/asia/indonesia-attacks-surabaya-intl/index.html

[11] David Malet, "Foreign Fighter Mobilization and Persistence in a Global Context", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, 3 (2015): 454-473

[12] Arsla Jawaid, "From Foreign Fighters to Returnees: The Challenges of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Policies", *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 12, 2(2017): 102-107

[13] Sexton, "What's in A Name? Proposing New Typologies for "Foreign Fighters", 34-43

[14] United Nations, "Foreign Terrorist Fighters", *Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee,* https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/foreign-terrorist-fighters/.

[15] Alex Schmidt and Judith Tinnes, "Foreign Terrorist Fighters With IS: A European Perspective", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism The Hague,* https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ICCT-Schmid-Foreign-Terrorist-Fighter-Estimates-Conceptual-and-Data-Issues-October20152.pdf

Syrian jihad'.[16] Therefore, it is important to recognise and address the conceptual difficulties of the nomenclature 'FTF' as defining the precise parameters of the term is 'central to understanding the impact of these 'FTFs.'[17] One way to do so would be to differentiate their intentions of travelling to the conflict zones, and reasons for returning from Syria.

One possible solution to ease these conceptual difficulties would be to adopt Mark Sexton's typography of FTFs. Sexton's categorisation of FTFs distinguishes between combatants and non-combatants, and qualitative variations within each classification. As seen in Figure 1, FTFs are categorised into violent radicals, terrorist trainees, radical affiliates and supporters, radical followers and radical provocateurs.

The Threats They Pose

Returning FTFs exhibit unpredictability in their behaviour as they are likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and emotional instability. As such, they could indirectly and directly partake in lone wolf attacks, act as 'virtual planners' who engage in logistical or financial duties and share operational and technical knowledge with others.[18] They could also become leaders who groom remote sympathisers into potential attackers[19] or facilitators for new FTFs to travel.[20]

The 'veteran effect' of returnees with battlefield experience goes beyond planning attacks and supporting extremist networks.[21] Hegghammer argues that the involvement of returning FTFs in a terrorist cell increases the likelihood of planning and the execution of a successful attack with a higher number of fatalities. Likewise, he found that no more than
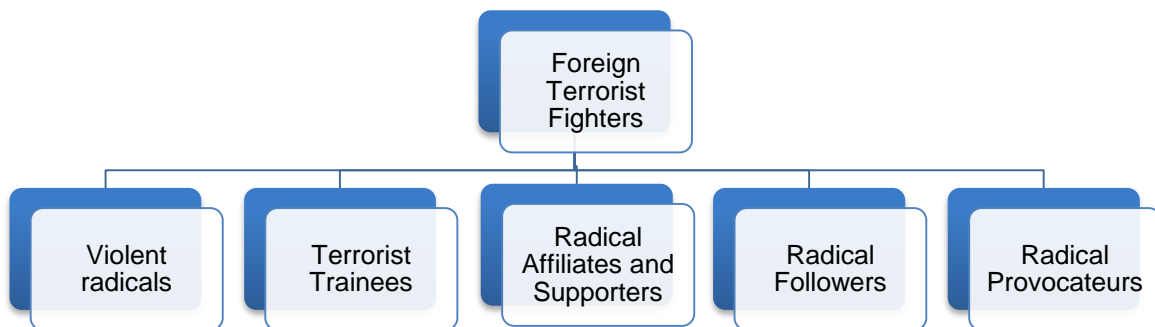

Figure 1: Illustration of Sexton's categorisation of FTFs

[16] JE Arasli, "Jihadist Foreign Fighters From A To Z. 200 Essential Facts You Need To Know About Jihadist Expeditionary Warfare In the Middle East", *Archipelago SYRAQ.*Baku: Teknur (2015): 69

[17] Ben Rich and Dara Conduit, 'The Impact of *Jihadist* Foreign Fighters on Indigenous Secular-Nationalist Causes: Contrasting Chechnya and Syria', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (Vol. 38, No. 2, 2015), p. 114.

[18] Europol, ", "TE-SAT 2016. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2016", 2016,

https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/europol_tesat_2016.pdf.

[19] Bridget Moreng, "ISIS' Virtual Puppeteers: How they recruit and train "Lone wolves", *Foreign Affairs,* September 21, 2016, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-09-21/isis-virtual-puppeteers

[20] Timothy Holman, "Gonna Get Myself Connected: The Role of Facilitation in Foreign Fighter Mobilizations", *Perspectives on Terrorism 10, 2(2016)*

[21] Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting," 1-15

11% of FTFs would pose as a threat upon returning home.[22] Although Gardner argued that an attack by a returning foreign fighter would be inevitable,[23] a study done by Hegghammer and Nesser in 2015 concluded that only 1 in 200 to 300 returnees became involved in plots or attacks.

Conversely, Cragin discovered that even a small number of returnees could undermine peace and security.[24] In his dataset comprising 27 IS-linked attacks and 19 plots from January 2014 to July 2016 in Western Europe, 18 of the attacks involved returnees providing operational or logistical support.

If he removed the (10) plots where it is not known if FTFs were involved, returnees were responsible for 50% of all attacks and plots. Although there are variations in the perceived level of threat returning FTFs pose, there is a general consensus that by 'upholding or performing secondary functions of the extremist networks', the returnees pose a serious and continuous threat to societies.[25]

Capturing the Complex Disengaged and De-radicalised Terrorist

The lack of conceptual development around disengagement makes conclusions drawn from discussions on disengagement premature.[26]

According to Horgan, disengagement refers to the abandonment of shared social norms, values, attitudes, beliefs and aspirations forged when the individual was still a member of the terrorist network.[27] However, it does not necessitate the physical act of leaving the group. [28] This process is gradual, but it is not always linear or forward moving. Also, it may proceed in fits and starts and would not be path dependent.[29]

However, Horgan suggests that disengagement on a psychological level can be compared to de-radicalisation.[30] Nevertheless, disengagement is not simply the reverse of radicalisation, although there is some evidence of a thematic relationship between the entry and exit experiences.[31]

Conversely, a subtle form of disengagement arises when terrorists who still adhere to their values and beliefs, change their positions or responsibilities in the group, or play a supporting role instead of being directly involved in actual terrorist operations.

Among the individuals that Horgan interviewed from 2006 to 2008, none of them are re-radicalised although almost all of them are disengaged.[32] In other words, there is no evidence to suggest that disengagement from terrorism may result in de-radicalisation.

In the process of disengagement, 'seniors' and friends may offer incentives in various form to re-join terrorist groups and activities and the consistent maintaining of such ties might

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[22] Ibid

[23] Frank Gardner, "Europe Could Feel the Backlash from Jihadist Conflicts", *BBC,* November 30, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world- middle-east-25155188.

[24] Kim Cragin, "The Challenge of Foreign Fighter Returnees", *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 33, 3(2017): 292-312

[25] Alastair Reed, Johanna Pohl and Marjolein Jegerings, "The Four Dimensions Of The Foreign Fighter Threat: Making Sense Of An Evolving Phenomenon", *ICCT*, 2017, https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ICCT-Reed-Pohl-The-Four-Dimensions-of-the-Foreign-Fighters-Threat-June-2017.pdf. However, this author is cognisant that prior experience on foreign battlefield is not a perquisite for carrying out attacks as seen in the attacks in Nice, France in 2016, Berlin Christmas Market in December 2016 and London Parliament in March 2017.

[26] John Horgan, "Deradicalisation or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation", *Perspectives on Terrorism* 2, 4(2008)

[27] Ibid

[28] Donatella Della Porta, "Leaving Underground Organization," in Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, eds., Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement (London: Routledge, 2009), 68

[29] Julie Chernov Hwang, "The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists: Understanding the Pathways", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 2 (2015): 277-295, doi:10.1080/09546553.2015.1034855.

[30] John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014).

[31] Tore Bjørgo, "The Process of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right," in Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, eds., Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement (London: Routledge, 2009), 40–41;

[32] John Horgan, "Deradicalisation or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation", *Perspectives on Terrorism* 2, 4(2008)

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swing the individual back to re-engagement i.e. recidivism.[33]

Recidivism

Recidivism refers to the process where a disengaged terrorist either reengages with the terrorist organisation or becomes re-radicalised. This reversed path is manifested through returning to terrorist groups or related activities. However, recidivism rates are difficult to calculate because there is no national database tracking arrests or convictions in a timely manner.[34]

Likewise, the inability to collect consistent and accurate data in the open domain is the 'first hurdle' that most researchers in this area face.[35] Even if data could be collected, the rate of recidivism could always be slightly higher with recidivists who escape detection by authorities. The data also may not capture individuals who re-engaged in terrorism after being released but managed to still play supporting logistical roles

Leaving Terrorist Activities Without Leaving Terrorism

According to the Indonesian National Counterterrorism Agency BNPT, 25 out of 300 terrorists who were released from prison had 'gone back to their old terror habits'.[36] The recidivism rate is estimated to be at least 15% based on the 47 cases the authors uncovered.

When recidivism occurs, the important takeaway is not to point fingers and deem the entire 'de-radicalisation programme' a failure but rather, identify that it is a sign of disengagement but not necessarily de-radicalization, per se. Although the disengaged may not act like terrorists, and may have left their groups, they may still

remain subscribed to their ideology, and be in a state of radicalisation. For instance, two former Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) members Qomarudin and Rachmat Pujo Prabowo were arrested in 2004 for sheltering Noordin Top, but continued to work with the Aceh camp upon being acquitted.[37]

Similar Trajectories for Engagement and Re-engagement

According to Ismail and Sim, the terrorists repeated the trajectory that originally brought them into extremist violence, except that the process was accelerated.[38]

Given the limited literature and research done in this aspect, it is reasonable to utilise the radicalisation frameworks, except proposing that the 'activation energy' to climb each step in Moghaddam's staircase to terrorism is lower and that it does not have to occur linearly in ascending order, as shown in Figure 2. 'Due to minimal alteration in beliefs, attitudes and values in the individual, there is no need for formal cognitive openings.[39]

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[33] Chernov Hwang, "The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists: Understanding The Pathways."
[34] Noor Huda Ismail and Susan Sim, "From Prisons to Carnage In Jakarta: Predicting Terrorist Recidivism In Indonesia's Prisons", *Brookings,* January 28, 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/predicting-terrorist-recidivism-in-indonesias-prisons/
[35] Dennis Pluchinsky, "Global Jihadist Recidivism: A Red Flag", *Studies In Conflict & Terrorism* 30, 3(2008): 182-200
[36] Ismail and Sim, "From Prisons To Carnage In Jakarta: Predicting Terrorist Recidivism In Indonesia's Prisons", January 28, 2016

[37] Sidney Jones, "Canberra Paper - Indonesian Terrorism," a paper delivered at a conference entitled, Indonesian Terrorism in a Global Context, on 5 December 2011, Australian National University, Canberra
[38] Ismail and Sim, "From Prisons To Carnage In Jakarta: Predicting Terrorist Recidivism In Indonesia's Prisons", January 28, 2016
[39] Scott Matthew Kleinmann, "Radicalization of Homegrown Sunni Militants in the United States: Comparing Converts and Non-Converts", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism 35, 4(2012): 278-297*
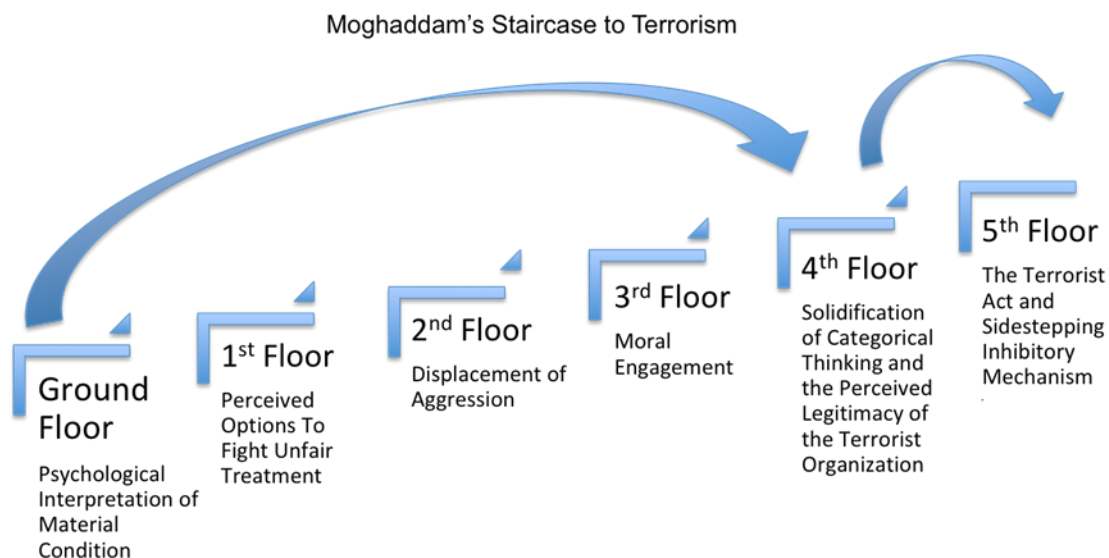
Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism

Figure 2: Accelerated re-engagement of the Moghaddam staircase, modified from Moghaddam's original staircase to terrorism

According to Ismail and Sim, four notable drivers contribute to former terrorists' re-engagement in extremist violence.[40] They are friendship, discipleship, group pressure or economic pressure. Amongst these factors, friendship, operationalised in the form of loyalty to friends, may be the single and most important factor in predicting recidivism. Group pressure, a more prestigious social standing, and leveraging the contacts, and support of existing networks are key reasons why re-engagement has occurred in Indonesia.
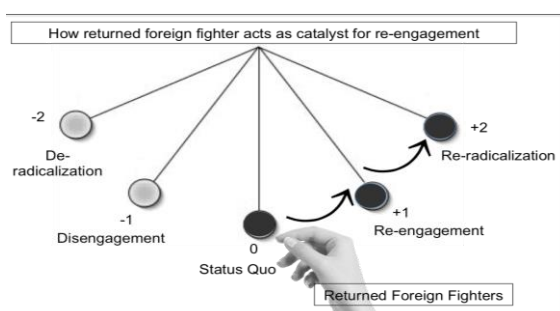
The Pendulum Model of Re-engagement[41] (PME)

Figure 3: The pendulum model of re-engagement (PME)

In this model, it is assumed that the conservation of energy leading to momentum does not apply here. As such, the pendulum would not swing around after it has been shifted to a new position but instead, remains at its new position. Furthermore, the numbers -2 to 2 are arbitrary values that have no numerical significance attributed to it, except to show the comparison between the respective stages.

Having covered the intricacies relating to disengagement and de-radicalisation and introducing the PME model, the paper will explore the 2/3 factors that would show how returnees become a valuable addition to the existing terrorist network through "the veteran effect," aided by the open pathways of re-engagement opportunities through offline and online channels. Together with the reinforcement loop and the underlying conditionality behind each (initial and prior) disengagement, this combination would

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[40] Susan Sim and Noor Huda Ismail, "Why Terrorists Go Back To Their Old Ways", *The Straits Times,* January 27, 2016, https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/why-terrorists-go-back-to-their-old-ways

[41] The reason "Reengagement' instead of re-radicalisation is used here is because the author thinks that it is reasonable to assume that it is easier

for a disengaged 'former terrorist' to go back to old ways than a de-radicalised 'rehabilitated former terrorist'. Simply put, a disengaged 'former terrorist' is at a higher risk of going back to its old ways than a 'de-radicalised former terrorist'. Therefore, re-engagement is the process where a disengaged former terrorist reverts to its old ways.

catalyse [42] cases of recidivism. With prolonged and undisturbed socialisation between disengaged ex-terrorists and returned FTFs, the former would even surpass the re-engagement stage to the re-radicalisation stage.

Combined Effect: The Veteran Identity of FTFs, Offline and Online Channels

Veteran FTFs can be perceived as individuals with high human capital. Using Castell's identity theory [43], resistance identity [44] towards governance and the rule of law is exemplified when they challenge the illegality of becoming a FTF on two occasions. The first occurs when the FTFs travel to Syria to participate, and second instance is when they start to evade arrests and prosecutions as they head home. As a result, they legitimise the rites of passage and the ideals that the 'Islamic State' endorses.

Hassan argues that different steps of involvement with terrorist activities have different currencies attached to them. [45] As an extension, active roles such as bombings and shootings are placed on a higher psychological premium on high profile roles, and the role of a returnee who was actively participating in armed jihad in Syria would be significantly higher and viewed as a 'senior'.

Likewise, the charisma[46] of the returning FTF boosts the construction of a 'veteran identity'. However, one cannot simply 'possess' 'charismatic authority' per se.[47] It is a form of legitimate domination that is attributed to a leader. Such a quality perpetuates the 'charismatic bond' between the leader and the followers, where his followers grant him the authority to lead in exchange for recognition, affection and reinforcement of worth.[48] Through a prolonged period of socialisation with these 'veterans' who are more experienced, it leads to an increased sense of power and control through such informal and supportive behaviour.[49] This would eventually form a sense of a support system, which might blossom into a tight-knit friendship that strengthens group loyalty.

Acting as 'virtual planners,' [50] 'leaders' [51] and 'facilitators' [52] in their capacity as veterans, they also leverage on their existing contacts in their terrorist network. This explains why Hegghammer concluded that the involvement of just one FTF could increase the probability of a successful attack.[53]

The utilisation of the online sphere to recruit, spread propaganda and plan attacks blurs the boundary between the offline and online space. Applications such as Skype, WhatsApp video calls ensure meetings with their 'friends' or 'seniors' to be a surreal experience, by

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[42] As mentioned earlier, 'catalysed' rather than 'caused' or 'result in' is used because this author recognises that high recidivism rate could be caused by institutional and structural factor of programmes, process and personnel in the rehabilitative programme. Hence, the author is not implying that there is causality, but rather, projects that the returnees would contribute to increasing recidivism, whether it is detected or not.

[43] Khalil Sardania and Rasoul Safizadeh, " The Internet and its potential for networking an identity-seeking: A study on ISIS", *Terrorism and Political Violence,* DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2017.1341877

[44] According to Manuel Castell, resistance identity is generated by actors, which the dominant authority considers them worthless and may even stigmatise them.

[45] Nasra Hassan, "An Arsenal of Believers: Talking to the Human Bombs", *The New Yorker,* November 19, 2001, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/11/19/an-arsenal-of-believers

[46] See David Hofman and Lorne Dawson, "The Neglected Role of Charismatic Authority in the Study of Terrorist Groups and Radicalization, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37,4(2014): 328-368 *for a deeper analysis into the neglected* role of charisma

and leadership. 'Charisma' is defined as a 'certain quality of an individual personality' where their words and deeds are understood in an essentially mythological frame.

[47] Eileen Barker, "Charismatization: The Social Production of 'an Ethos Propitious to the Mobilisation of Sentiments", In: Beckford, James T. and Dobbelaere, Karel, (eds.) Secularization, Rationalism and Sectarianism: Essays in Honour of Bryan R. Wilson. Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK, pp. 181-202. ISBN 0198277210

[48] Roy Wallis, "The Social Construction of Charisma," Social Compass 29, 1(1982): 25–39.

[49] John Horgan, J, Divided we stand Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

50 Europol, ", "TE-SAT 2016. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2016", 2016,

[51] Moreng, "ISIS' Virtual Puppeteers: How They Recruit and Train "Lone Wolves"

[52] Holman, "Gonna Get Myself Connected: The Role of Facilitation in Foreign Fighter Mobilizations"

[53] Thomas Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 1 (February 2013): 1-15.

allowing them to see and hear one another. Furthermore, these applications are ubiquitous, very affordable and highly assessable.

The combined effect ticks off a number of boxes that drives former terrorists to re-engagement as mentioned earlier in Indonesia and they include discipleship, friendship and loyalty to friends, leveraging contacts and the support from existing networks. Put together, this is the epitome of a reinforcement loop [54] as mentioned in Hwang's research.

Looking Ahead

Although dialogue on criminalising or reintegration of returning FTFs has been recurring and governments in different jurisdictions are working together to come up with a solution through data-sharing, it is imperative that the policies need to take into account the close linkages between the four threat dimensions: social-polarisation, travel of FTFs, actors and sympathisers and returnees.[55] Specifically, policymakers need to account for second and third order effects, where targeting one dimension might result in unintended negative consequences in another dimension,[56] shifting problems from one dimension to another.

Experts such as Reed, Pohling and Jegerings [57] have also raised the possibility of reversing the 'veteran effect' through former detainees or de-radicalised (not disengaged) former terrorists.

Sexton's suggestions of the 5 distinct typologies should not stop at the academic level. Instead, key policymakers and decision-makers should not categorise all FTFs as the same, which could possibly perpetuate a self-fulfilling prophecy.[58] Along that line, blanket criminalisation of returning FTFs would be minimised, allowing for more opportunities for

reintegration, instead of increasing polarisation and harbouring more grievances. Finally, the PME model also suggests that although disengagement may be a more practical and pragmatic goalpost for terrorist rehabilitation programmes to achieve, in comparison to de-radicalisation, it seems that authorities cannot settle only for disengagement anymore.

Conclusion

Although stopping outward FTF flows was critical between 2014 to 2016, dealing with returning FTFs is a more critical component that demands concerted efforts from academics, practitioners, policymakers and law enforcement agencies. The lack of any 'major and credible study' in the open domain regarding recidivism cases should not be a reason for dismissing the process of the possible re-engagement pathway as 'an explosion of speculation with little grounding.'[59]

Given that the returning FTFs could serve as a catalyst for recidivism, the risk of re-engagement could and should be mitigated by focusing on a more coherent counter terrorism approach that covers the four stages of de-radicalisation, disengagement, and more importantly, re-engagement and re-radicalisation. A better way to understand terrorist behaviour could mean focusing on the alternate pathways that terrorists could adopt, rather than identifying and profiling root causes. That being said, stakeholders should not underestimate the impact of FTFs on disengaged terrorists, and instead should look into tailoring programmes from existing ones to engage the 'disengaged terrorists'.

For example, law-enforcement departments could develop a matrix to assess early signs of re-engagement or even re-radicalisation amongst 'disengaged' terrorists on offline and online channels. Given that more information

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[54] Chernov Hwang, "The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists: Understanding The Pathways." An example of a reinforcement loop is when one factor builds upon another factor, such as initiating a priority shift when an individual furthers their education or finds employment while building new relationships. However, the converse of the example is applicable in this point.

[55] Reed, Pohl and Jegerings, "The Four Dimensions of the Foreign Fighter Threat: Making Sense of an Evolving Phenomenon."

[56] A poignant example: Revoking the passports of those who intend to travel as a foreign fighter might see a re-direction in strategy where attacks would be re-directed to home grounds.

[57] Reed, Pohl and Jegerings, "The Four Dimensions of the Foreign Fighter Threat: Making Sense of An Evolving Phenomenon."

[58] Ibid

[59] Ibid

on recidivism cases would be released or evident in the next 5-10 years, stakeholders should start building up and updating a database on likely individuals who are 'at risk' of re-engaging and being re-radicalised. One area worth looking into would be the case of conditionality-based disengagement [60]. Furthermore, they should not be discouraged even if there is a moderate time lag. This is seen in Indonesia, where the returnees from the 1970-1980s Afghanistan waited for 7 years to re-engage in terrorist activities against Christians in Ambon province.

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[60] Chernov Hwang, "The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists: Understanding The Pathways."

Terrorist Threat to the 2018 World Cup in Russia

Nodirbek Soliev

The terrorist threat to the World Cup in Russia emanates from three different sources. Firstly, there are a few thousand Russian fighters in the ranks of IS and Al-Qaeda in the Middle East, who have periodically demonstrated their intention and capability to target Russia. Secondly, existing clandestine networks of local militant groups led by the Caucasus Emirate (CE) and Wilayah Qawqaz (Caucasus Province) in the North Caucasus could also target the international sporting event. Lastly, some radicalised elements within small segments of the Central Asian diaspora in Russia could also perpetrate an attack during the event.

Introduction

Russia will host the 21st edition of the FIFA World Cup final games from 14 June to 15 July 2018. Sporting events will take place in 12 different venues spread across 11 major cities located in the western part of the country, collectively referred to as 'European Russia'. The host cities are Kaliningrad, Kazan, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Saint Petersburg, Samara, Saransk, Sochi, Volgograd and Yekaterinburg.[1] As close to three million local and foreign football fans are expected to attend the world's biggest international sporting event, ensuring adequate security would be a top priority for Russian counter-terrorism agencies.[2]

A number of high-profile terrorist attacks in Russia in recent years have fuelled reasonable concerns about the security of the World Cup. Contrary to similar scepticism expressed by the international community ahead of the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games, Russia has demonstrated its capabilities and has successfully prevented the occurrence of attacks during large-scale events. Russia is committed to ensure that security prevails during the upcoming World Cup, but this could be complicated for the security agencies in the context of the existing terrorist threat.

Presently, the militant landscape of Russia is multi-dimensional and complex, involving multiple local and international terrorist entities. The terrorist threat to the World Cup is evident in two ways. One, in online propaganda statements released by the Islamic State (IS) threatening to target the event, showcase the willingness of the organisation to conduct attacks in Russia. Two, the intention and ability of local militant groups to conducti terrorist attacks in major urban centres of the country should not be overlooked as well. By focusing on terrorism-linked developments in the Middle East, local militant groups in the Russian North Caucasus, and terrorist activities involving radicalised members of the Central Asian diaspora in Russia, this article will assess the terrorist threat to the upcoming World Cup. It will also assess Russia's counter-terrorism capabilities and their effectiveness in securing the world's biggest sporting event.

Terrorist Threat to Russia and the World Cup

The current terrorist threat in Russia has been shaped by two major developments. The first development is related to the emergence of a new generation of Russian fighters in the armed conflict in Syria and Iraq whereas the second development is linked to Moscow taking a more active stance in the Syrian conflict since September 2015.

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[1] "2018 FIFA World Cup Russia". *FIFA.com,* 2018, https://www.fifa.com/worldcup/destination/
[2] "Orgkomitet Rasschityvaet, Chto Rossiju Vo Vremja Chm-2018 Posetit 1 Mln Inostrannyh

Bolelshikov" ['The Organising Committee Expects That 1 Million Foreign Fans Will Visit Russia During The World Cup 2018'], *TASS,* June 29, 2017, http://tass.ru/sport/4376236

Since the breakout of the Syrian civil war in 2011, close to 4000 Russians have reportedly left Russia to join militant groups that are fighting against the Syrian and Iraqi government forces.[3] Reports have revealed that a majority of these fighters are ethnic Chechens and Dagestanis. With a series of military setbacks and loss of territory in Iraq and Syria, IS has sought to compensate for its losses through expansion in conflict zones. IS has also called for attacks against Russia due to its involvement in the Syrian conflict. Since February 2015, IS and its local affiliate in Russia, known as 'Wilayah Qawqaz' (Caucasus Province) have conducted more than 14 attacks against Russia. Although these attacks mainly targeted the North Caucasus, IS also separately claimed responsibility for an attack on a traffic police station in Moscow province in August 2016 and a supermarket bombing in Saint Petersburg in December 2017. Russian interests abroad have also been targeted by IS and its affiliates. In October 2015, IS' Wilayah Sinai claimed responsibility for the crash of the Russian Metrojet plane over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, stating that it was a retaliatory attack for Russian air strikes in Syria.[4]

IS commenced its online propaganda campaign against the 2018 World Cup in 2017. In October 2017, the pro-IS Wafa' Media Foundation released digitally altered images of football superstars like Neymar, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo being executed in its propaganda materials. IS supporters and sympathisers in different parts of the world have subsequently joined the pro-IS online extremist group in their propaganda campaign. In April and May 2018, IS-linked online propaganda networks have circulated at least six sets of posters that threatened to target the event and the football players. The posters depicted Russia's World Cup logo torn in half, with menacing captions in English, Arabic and Russian, such as, "We are the one who chooses [sic] the battlefield," "I swear that the mujahedeen's fire will burn you, just you wait," and "Our words are what you see not what you hear. So just you wait, we are waiting too."[5]

Likewise, a pro-IS Indonesian group called 'Generation 5.54' released two separate posters in April 2018 which threatened to attack the World Cup in Russia.[6] The first poster was circulated on 27 April 2018, with a short message in English, "Wait for us". It displays an individual holding a grenade in his hand inside a stadium and an image of a beheaded man on the scoreboard display. A few days later, the group published another poster portraying the international football tournament as 'IS vs Russia'. In the poster, Russian football players stood beside President, Vladimir Putin and faced off IS fighters from the other side. The poster included an English message "life or death". 'Generation 5.54', which is also known as 'Gen 5.54' or 'Generasi 5.54', was founded in early 2018 and was inspired by Al Fatihin. According to SITE Intelligence, the group runs a blog and a Telegram channel in Indonesian. Some researchers believe that while the members of Generation 5.54 are not IS

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[3] "Bol'shinstvo naemnikov gruppirovki "Islamskoe gosudarstvo" – eto rossiyane' ('Most of the recruits of the Islamic State are Russians'), *Echo Moskvy,* 26 October 2017, https://echo.msk.ru/news/2080628-echo.html

[4] Lizzie Dearden, Nadia Beard and Ruth Michaelson, "Russian Plane Crash: Black Boxes 'Show Aircraft Was Not Hit From Outside' - But Terrorism Not Ruled Out," *The Independent,* November 2, 2015, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/egypt-plane-crash-black-boxes-show-aircraft-was-not-hit-from-outside-but-terrorism-not-ruled-out-a6718161.html

[5] Marissa Payne, "Pro-ISIS Poster Threatening World Cup Terrorist Attack Depicts Lionel Messi Crying Blood," *The Washington Post*, October 24, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/early-lead/wp/2017/10/24/pro-isis-poster-threatening-world-cup-terrorist-attack-depicts-lionel-messi-crying-blood/?utm_term=.312cc7c92a92

[6] "Pro-IS Indonesian Group Portrays 2018 FIFA World Cup As "IS Vs Russia", *SITE Intelligence Group,* April 30, 2018, https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24297:pro-is-indonesian-group-portrays-2018-fifa-world-cup-as-is-vs-russia&catid=15:chatter&acm=1472_10679

operatives, they represent IS sympathisers and supporters who are waging a 'media jihad'.[7] Although it is unlikely that this group will present a physical threat to the World Cup, it appears to seek popularity and legitimacy among its Indonesian-speaking audience by circulating such propaganda.

Terrorist attacks on sporting events are relatively uncommon compared to attacks on other targets, such as public transportation, markets and governmental buildings. However, certain attacks suggest that sporting events are an attractive target for terrorist groups like IS. IS has targeted a series of football matches and events in different parts of the world. One such incident included the triple suicide bombings outside the Stade de France in Paris on 13 November 2015, which resulted in 130 deaths during a match between France and Germany.[8] Other attacks on sporting targets include the Munich Olympic Games in September 1972, Atlanta Olympic Games in July 1996, Sri Lankan national cricket team in Pakistan in May 2009, Boston Marathon in April 2013, Istanbul football stadium in December 2016, and the team bus of Borussia Dortmund football team in April 2017.

The launch of the extensive propaganda campaign by IS and pro-IS outfits against the World Cup is critical as it could trigger attacks targeting the event from two sources. First, the Wilayah Qawqaz and Al-Qaeda's local affiliate or second, self-radicalised local and foreign nationals, specifically Central Asians, could plan to conduct attacks.

Terrorist Threat in the North Caucasus

North Caucasus, or officially the North Caucasian Federal District (NCFD), is a turbulent zone in Russia that has witnessed ethno-separatist conflicts and terrorist activities from 1991 to 2009. For the past few years, militancy in the region has declined. This is largely due to a massive security crackdown by Russian security services that was launched in the run-up to the Sochi Winter Olympics. Despite the relative decline in violence, militant groups have been conducting attacks against Russian administrative and security assets. They are based in North Caucasus and have ties to local criminal networks, regional and international terrorist groups. Presently, the two major groups operating in the North Caucasus are the Caucasus Emirate (CE) and IS' Wilayah Qawqaz. Both groups wage armed jihad to establish an independent Islamic state in North Caucasus.

After the breakout of the civil war in Syria in 2011, terrorism in the North Caucasus took on an external dimension. In the past, the militancy in this region was led only by indigenous groups, which are mostly those united under CE. In 2015, IS' Wilayah Qawqaz overtook CE as the largest domestic terrorist group in Russia. Since 2014, local insurgent groups have gradually shifted their allegiance from CE to IS. Some experts have argued that a number of CE commanders had collectively defected to IS due to CE's now-deceased leader Al-Dagestani's censure against suicide bombings and using civilians as targets. In 2014, Al-Dagestani argued that suicide bombings are against the principles of *Sharia Law* and at the same time, he hoped that his group could gain legitimacy by avoiding large-scale civilian causalities.[9] Although his order was strictly followed by all militant units under the hierarchy of CE, Wilayah Qawqaz reintroduced suicide operations in Russia.[10]

This move has considerably weakened CE and eventually led to the establishment of IS' local affiliate Wilayah Qawqaz. On 23 June 2015, in an audio statement entitled "O Our People Respond to the Caller of Allah", IS spokesperson Abu Muhammad al-Adnani al-Shami announced the establishment of a 'province' and named Abu Muhammad al-Kadari or Kadarskiy, whose real name was Rustam Asilderov, as 'wali' (governor) of the

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[7] The author's interview with Remy Bin Mahzam, Associate Research Fellow at the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, RSIS, NTU, Singapore.

[8] "Paris Attacks: What Happened On The Night," *BBC News,* December 9, 2015,http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34818994

[9] Harleen Gambhir, "ISIS Declares Governorate in Russia's North Caucasus Region," *Institute for the*

Study of War, June 23, 2015, http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/isis-declares-governorate-russia%E2%80%99s-north-caucasus-region

[10] Mairbek Vatchagaev, "Militants Loyal to Islamic State Become More Active in North Caucasus," *Eurasia Daily Monitor,* February 19, 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=45115&cHash=4a3d10abb3d16ddb5dd9640cdd9f0080#.VxOpNXopqT0

new province.[11] On 3 December 2016, the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) claimed that Asildarov and four close associates were killed in an anti-terror raid near Makhachkala, Dagestan.[12] Since then, the Wilayah Qawqaz leadership has not been identified. According to Al-Adnani, the Wilayah Qawqaz was representative of IS' territorial expansion outside the Middle East.[13] It aligns itself with IS' political agenda and focuses on engaging in 'militant jihad' against 'anti-Islamic' and 'anti-Sunni' countries like Russia, Syria, Iraq, Iran and the West. However, Wilayah Qawqaz does not hold territorial control over the North Caucasus and is presently not strong enough to engage in large-scale insurgent activities due to security measures imposed by Russian authorities.

IS' Wilayah Qawqaz Biggest Threat to the World Cup

Even though Wilayah Qawqaz has not issued any statement regarding the World Cup, related online propaganda by IS and its affiliates in different parts of the world could encourage its members to target the event. Past incidents point to the possibility of suicide bombings, knife and gun attacks by lone-actor militants during the tournament.

Wilayah Qawqaz is capable of engaging in violent acts and has conducted suicide bombings and knife attacks since its inception. On 15 February 2016, a car bomb exploded by a suicide attacker at a traffic police checkpoint in Dagestan, with IS claiming responsibility.[14] The bombing was the first such attack in the region since 2013 and killed at least two police officers and injured 17 others.[15] In August 2017, IS claimed responsibility for two separate knife

attacks. In the first incident, two men stabbed one policeman to death and wounded another in Kaspiysk city of Russia's Dagestan. In the second incident, a knife-wielding lone-wolf militant stabbed seven civilians in the Siberian city of Surgut, before he himself was gunned down by the police.[16] In another related attack in February 2018, a man carrying a knife and a hunting rifle opened fire on churchgoers at an Orthodox church in Dagestan. He killed five women and injured several others. IS claimed responsibility for the attack shortly thereafter and labelled the attacker as 'Khalil al-Dagestani' or 'one of its soldiers'.[17]

In comparison, the CE is less likely to mount attacks against the World Cup. This is primarily due to reduced membership in light of the recent deaths of top commanders, defections to IS and the move away from suicide bombings as a tactic. Presently, the CE is at its most inactive stage and has been struggling to survive and remain relevant in Russia.

Al-Qaeda and the Radicalisation of Central Asian Diaspora Communities

Recently, Russia has been facing a threat from the radicalisation of the Central Asian diaspora and migrant communities. Occasionally, Russian security agencies have disclosed that they have thwarted terrorist plots by self-radicalised Central Asian migrants. On 25 April 2017, a previously unknown militant group which called itself Kateeba al-Imam Shamil (The Imam Shamil Battalion), claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing on a subway system in Saint Petersburg. In a statement circulated online, the militant group claimed that its 'heroic soldier' had carried out the attack 'on the orders' of Al-Qaeda's leader Ayman al-

[11] Gambhir, "ISIS Declares Governorate in Russia's North Caucasus Region," June 23, 2015.
[12] "Head Of ISIS 'Branch' In Russia's N. Caucasus Killed In Special Police Op – FSB," *Russia Today*, December 3, 2016, https://www.rt.com/news/369124-caucasus-isis-leader-killed-fsb/
[13] Remy Mahzam, "The Electronic Digitisation Of ISIS: Building A Multi-Media Legacy," *RSIS Commentary,* No. 228, October 27, 2015, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CO15228.pdf
[14] "ISIS claims responsibility for southern Russian car bombing that killed 2, injured 17," RT, Russia, 15 February 2016, https://www.rt.com/news/332457-car-bomb-explosion-dagestan/

[15] Dzutsati, V. "Dagestani Authorities Are in Denial About Terrorist Attacks in the Republic," Eurasia Daily Monitor, Volume: 13 Issue: 45, March 7, 2016, https://jamestown.org/program/dagestani-authorities-are-in-denial-about-terrorist-attacks-in-the-republic-2/
[16] Damien Sharkov, "ISIS in Russia: Extremists Claim Two Knife Attacks in One Month," *Newsweek,* August 28, 2017, http://www.newsweek.com/isis-russia-extremists-claim-two-knife-attacks-one-month-655939
[17] Andrew Kramer and Rukmini Callimachi, "ISIS Claims Deadly Attack On Church in Russian Region of Dagestan," *The New York Times,* February 18, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/18/world/europe/russia-dagestan-attack.html

Zawahiri. It also stated that the attack was 'revenge for Russia's interference' in Syria, Libya and Chechnya and threatened Moscow with further attacks.[18] The subway attack killed at least 17 people, including the suicide bomber and injured 50 others.

This attack represented the first time that a militant group has conducted an attack in Russia based on Al-Qaeda's direct order. Previously, it had been more common for Chechen and Dagestani militants from the restive North Caucasus to take responsibility for such attacks. It is also pertinent that foreign-born militants from Central Asia were the perpetrators of this bombing. The ability of foreign terrorists to attack Saint Petersburg, known to be one of the safest cities in the country, indicates that the terrorist threat is expanding across key urban centres.

After the attack, security services in Saint Petersburg and Moscow detained at least ten Central Asian natives who are mostly from Kyrgyzstan for supporting the suicide bomber.[19] Those arrested included Akram Azimov and his younger brother Abror Azimov. The Azimov brothers are ethnic Uzbeks from southern Kyrgyzstan who have Russian citizenship. They have been accused of planning, coordinating and funding the attack and also training to be suicide bombers.[20] According to Russian security authorities, Akram Azimov, who is identified as the ringleader, received logistical and financial support on the ground from a transnational network that operated in Russia, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan.[21]

The St Petersburg metro bombing could indicate Al Qaeda's growing interest in attacking Russia as retaliation for Russia's military involvement in Syria. It is worth noting that the attack came after Abu Muhammad al-Julani, the leader of Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS), a former Al Qaeda affiliate in Syria, called for reprisal attacks in Russia as a response to what he said was the 'indiscriminate killing of Sunni Muslims'.[22] The heightened interest of Al-Qaeda in Russia, indicates that the group could also stage attacks targeting the World Cup in order to gain recognition and compete with IS' Wilayah Qawqaz.

Conclusion

Russia's security and intelligence agencies have been prioritising counter-terrorist operations ahead of the World Cup. They have heightened security measures in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria in a bid to weaken militant networks and limit their capacity to plot attacks. In addition, they have enforced preventive security operations that are aimed at detaining suspects, seizing weapons and disrupting plots nationwide. Security agencies have also been closely monitoring foreign diaspora and immigrant communities, especially in the host cities. Furthermore, security designers are planning to effectively utilise digital innovations such as automatic facial recognition and surveillance systems in the host cities to identify known or suspected terrorists.[23] The authorities decided to ban the use of private drones within 100 kilometres of the host cities after reports emerged about the possible use of drones by IS to conduct attacks during the World Cup. The Russian military will establish no-fly zones over 41 locations and will deploy 60 mobile drone-jamming units to disrupt potential drone attacks.

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[18] Ivan Nechepurenko and Rukmini Callimachi, "Website With Qaeda Ties Publishes Claim On St. Petersburg Bombing," *The New York Times*, April 25, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/25/world/europe/st-petersburg-metro-al-qaeda.html
[19] RFE/RL, "FSB Chief Says Russian Authorities Know Who Ordered Subway Bombing," *RadioFreeEurope,* April 20, 2017, https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-petersburg-bombing-10th-suspect-arrested/28440918.html
[20] Darya Podolskaya, "Azimov Brothers Financed By Terrorist Organization In Turkey," *24.kg News Agency*, April 21, 2017, https://24.kg/english/50098_Azimov_brothers_financed_by_terrorist_organization_in_Turkey/

[21] "Noviy Figurant Dela O Vzrive V Peterburge Dvajdi Viezjal V Turciyu," ['The New Defendant of the Case of the St. Petersburg Explosion Travelled to Turkey Twice'], *Russia Today,* April 20, 2017, https://ria.ru/incidents/20170420/1492699524.html
[22] "Al-Qaeda Ally Vows Retaliation for Russian 'Crusade' In Syria," *RadioFreeEurope,* October 13, 2015, https://www.rferl.org/a/al-qaeda-ally-vows-retaliation-russian-crusade-syria-nusra-front-bashar-assad/27303164.html
[23] Natasha Turak, "Why The 'Lone Jihadi' Poses The Greatest Terror Threat To This Summer's World Cup In Russia," *CNBS,* May 1, 2018, https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/01/russia-world-cup-threatened-by-lone-jihadi-terror-attacks.html

The most significant threat to the upcoming World Cup in Russia comes from IS' Wilayah Qawqaz and attacks by IS-inspired individuals. The possibility of self-radicalised locals and foreign individuals, which include members of the Central Asian diaspora, attempting to attack the World Cup event cannot be ruled out. These radicalised individuals could attempt to replicate attacks conducted by lone-wolf actors inspired by IS in parts of Europe and the United States (US) since 2015. Specifically, the vehicle attack by an Uzbek man in Stockholm could have inspired the similar 2017 attack in Manhattan, New York.

Given the massive security clampdown, militant groups and individuals are unlikely to be able to plot major coordinated and sophisticated attacks during the Russian World Cup that resemble the series of suicide bombings perpetrated by IS near the national stadium in Paris in 2015. However, there could be unsophisticated but high-impact attacks that involve suicide bombings outside highly secured areas. Past attacks demonstrate that public transportation systems, government and security personnel and military installations are attractive targets, where suicide bombings and knife-attacks are preferred. Since sporting venues, airports, and hotels would be highly secure during the World Cup, terrorists could choose the public transportation system in close proximity to the World Cup venues as a possible target. Any attack on public transportation during, or prior to an international sporting event, would grant unprecedented visibility to the group due to the higher media coverage. The twin suicide bombings on the mass transportation system in Volgograd just a few months before the 2014 Winter Olympics also indicate that a similar tactic could be used for the 2018 World Cup.

Russian authorities have reassured the public that it is prepared to keep the tournament safe from terrorism. On 5 March 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that there has been a decline in the number of terrorist incidents over the past six years. The number of incidents fell from 316 to 85 and 25 in 2012, 2014 and 2017 respectively. In addition, authorities had disrupted 68 terrorist-related incidents, out of which there were 25 planned attacks.[24] In January 2018, the head of the Russian National Anti-Terrorism Committee said preparations were 'already underway' to ensure a safe environment. A successful World Cup event without terrorist attacks will permit Russia to showcase its counter-terrorism achievements and enhance its international image. In addition, this will help Russia to win wavering domestic support for its involvement in the Syrian civil war.[25]

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[24] "68 Terrorist Crimes Prevented In Russia In 2017 – Putin," *TASS,* March 05, 2018, http://tass.com/world/992776

[25] Russia had justified its participation in the Syrian civil war locally by stating that it was an attempt to prevent the spread of terrorism to its own territory. For details, please see A Losev, "Rubl Vverx: Kakvoyna V Sirii Povliyayet Na Ekonomiku Rossii", *RBK Group,* September 30, 2015, https://www.rbc.ru/opinions/economics/30/09/2015/560c00f99a7947689564bbbc.

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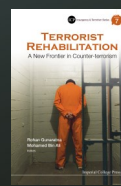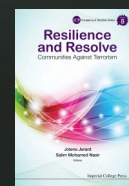
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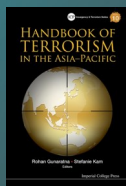
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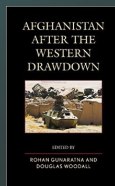
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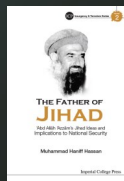(Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015)

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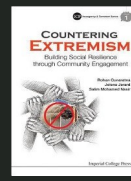(Imperial College Press, 2015)

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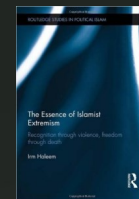(Imperial College Press, 2015)
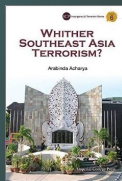
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