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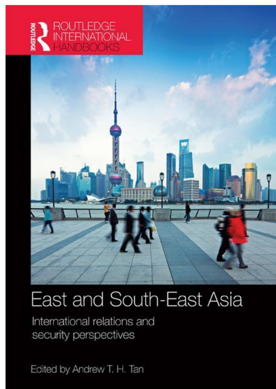

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Terrorism in South-East Asia after 9–11

Andrew T. H. Tan

South-East Asia came into prominence in the global war against terrorism following the seminal terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001 (9–11). On the heels of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in late 2001 directed at al-Qa'ida and its Taliban allies, the arrival of over 600 troops from the USA in the southern Philippines in 2002 was widely regarded as the opening of a new 'second front' against global terrorism (BBC News 2002). The focus on the region was supported by evidence uncovered by US Special Forces in Afghanistan, where a surveillance video-tape was found in an al-Qa'ida safe house. The tape revealed a plan to carry out a series of co-ordinated terrorist attacks against Western interests in Singapore, in a joint operation by al-Qa'ida and its regional associate, a hitherto unknown radical network known as the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). The unmasking of the JI led to arrests of suspected operatives of the group in Singapore in December in 2001 (CNN.com 2003).

However, not all of South-East Asia came under the umbrella of this 'second front' in the George W. Bush Administration's global war against terrorism. The USA has only been concerned with radical Islamist terrorism in the context of this 'global war' (the term 'radical Islamist' refers to the small minority who adhere to radical, violent interpretations of the religion, and is not a reference to the overwhelming majority of Muslims). Thus, it is commonly understood that the 'second front' primarily covered a major sub-region of South-East Asia—namely, the Malay archipelago, which has the world's largest population of Muslims. Indeed, the perceived strategic importance of this region has been such that Washington's leading counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism strategist David Kilcullen warned that should al-Qa'ida substantially penetrate the Malay archipelago, the global *jihad* might attain an unstoppable momentum (Kilcullen 2004: 32).

Yet, the caveat that must be noted is that defining what constitutes terrorism in the Malay archipelago is not straightforward, given the diversity of armed groups that long predated the events of 9–11 and al-Qa'ida. Rebel groups in the Malay archipelago have included armed Muslim separatists in Mindanao in the southern Philippines, Aceh in the island of Sumatra in Indonesia, and the southern provinces of Thailand. They also include Christian separatists in West Papua in Indonesia, Timor-Leste independence fighters (prior to Timor-Leste's independence in 2002) and communist insurgents in central Luzon in the Philippines. This means that terrorism and political violence in this region cannot be equated with radical Islamist terrorism.

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Given space constraints, however, this article will focus on the newer, post 9–11 context and discourse, although attention will also be given to the older, pre-existing Muslim separatism.

The Jemaah Islamiyah

The JI has proven to be a serious threat to the security of the region, particularly in Indonesia. First unmasked in Singapore in early 2002, it carried out a successful terrorist attack in Bali, in Indonesia, in October 2002. The JI waited for the start of the tourist season as part of its plan to specifically target Australians, since Australia has been closely identified with the USA on account of its strong support for its global war on terrorism. Some 202 people were killed in the attack, of whom 88 were mostly young Australian tourists. The Bali attack was a watershed in the region, on account of the large number of casualties and the sophistication of the bombs. More significantly, local suicide bombers had carried out the attack, which indicated that radical Islamist ideology from the Middle East had found adherents in the region.

With the assistance of Australian police and forensics, the Indonesian security services quickly tracked down and arrested a number of suspected JI operatives (Tan 2004: 43–44). However, the three key suspects, Amrozi Nurhasyim, Ali Gufron and Imam Samudra, who were subsequently convicted and eventually executed in November 2008, caused Western outrage with the staunch defence of their actions and the jovial mood they displayed during the trials, earning them the description as 'the smiling bombers'.

While supposedly a new radical Islamist network and an offshoot of al-Qa'ida, the JI is in fact derived from a much older movement, known as the Darul Islam. The Darul Islam challenged the then Republic of Indonesia by carrying out an ultimately abortive rebellion in the 1950s aimed at establishing an Islamic state run strictly according to the *Shari'a* or Islamic laws. Through the use of a comprehensive counter-insurgency approach, in some respects mirroring that used by the British in dealing with the communist insurgency in neighbouring Malaya that occurred around the same time, the Darul Islam was finally defeated in 1962.

The Darul Islam, however, was not completely stamped out. The ideal of an Islamic state continued to appeal to some, and was kept alive by Darul Islam veterans who escaped capture or death and then went underground and continued to propagate its ideology. The founders of the JI—namely, Abu Bakar Bashir and Abdullah Sungkar—saw themselves as ideological heirs of the Darul Islam, and propagated similar ideals through the religious school they founded in Ngruki, near the city of Solo in central Java in 1971. Bashir and Sungkar soon attracted the attention of the Suharto regime's security apparatus and were tried for subversion in 1982. In 1985, they fled to Malaysia after their release, where they continued their work in religious education. It was there that they established the Jemaah Islamiyah network, which included former volunteer *mujahidin* ('holy warriors') who had served in Afghanistan in the resistance against the Soviets in the 1980s (ICG 2002: 7–13).

The JI received funding, terrorist training and ideological education from al-Qa'ida, with some JI members travelling to Afghanistan to attend al-Qa'ida training camps in the 1990s after the Soviet withdrawal. The two groups co-operated in setting up training camps for militants in Mindanao in the southern Philippines and Poso in Central Sulawesi, in Indonesia. Despite the close connections as well as a shared radical ideology, however, the two are organizationally distinct, with the JI operating independently of al-Qa'ida (ICG 2003: 30). As such, it can be described as an al-Qa'ida associate. Even so, its links with al-Qa'ida have been substantially degraded, particularly after the arrest of the key co-ordinator between the two—namely, Riduan Isamuddin (better known as Hambali), who was arrested in Thailand in 2003.

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The objectives of the JI can be discerned from captured or recovered documents. According to its founding document, *Pedoman Umum Perjuangan al-Islamiyyah* (General Guide for the Struggle of Jemaah Islamiyah), the principal objective is the creation of an Islamic state. Whilst this is in line with the older Darul Islam, the JI goes further to describe this as a stepping stone to the restoration of the global Islamic caliphate, which is al-Qa'ida's objective. The document also emphasizes the importance of education, and through its stress on military training, strongly implies its readiness to use violence (Pavlova 2007: 82).

Terrorist attacks by the JI

The JI has carried out a series of terrorist attacks in Indonesia, beginning with the deadly Bali bombing in October 2002. After that, it carried out an attack on another soft target: the US-owned Marriott Hotel in August 2003. Using a car bomb driven by a suicide bomber and detonated remotely by mobile phone, the attack killed 12 people and injured over 150 others. However, this attack could be said to have failed in its objective of killing Westerners, as most of the dead and injured were Indonesians, the sole Western casualty being a Dutch banker having lunch at the hotel (Associated Press 2003).

This was followed up by a car bomb attack on the Australian High Commission in Jakarta in September 2004. This attack killed 10 people and injured more than 160. However, once again, the objective of the attack failed, as those killed or injured were predominantly Indonesians (*The Independent* 2004). In October 2005 a second terrorist attack was carried out in Bali, this time killing 23 people and injuring 135 (GlobalSecurity.org 2009). Again, this attack could not have been said to be very successful as the number of casualties was relatively low, and the dead included the three suicide bombers.

A hiatus in terrorist attacks followed, as Indonesian counter-terrorism police scored a number of successes, eliminating a significant number of JI operatives throughout the country, thus enabling Indonesia to enjoy a four-year respite from major terrorist attacks. Indonesian counter-terrorism has been aided by the unprecedented amount of regional counter-terrorism co-operation since the events of 9–11, and particularly after the Bali bombings in 2002, as regional governments recognized the transnational nature of the new terrorism inspired by radical ideology. Thus, hundreds of alleged JI operatives have been arrested throughout the region, including in Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Senior al-Qa'ida operatives in South-East Asia were also arrested in the course of 2002. They included Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, who was arrested in the Philippines, and Omar al-Faruq, who was arrested in Indonesia. The arrests also uncovered terrorist plots in the region, including attacks on Western embassies, US Navy ships and churches, as well as a plot to kill then President Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia (*Time* 2002). Counter-terrorism efforts were handsomely rewarded when Hambali was tracked down in Thailand in 2003 as a result of regional police co-operation. His arrest degraded the links between al-Qa'ida and the JI, since he was the key liaison operative and had been responsible for planning major terrorist attacks. His capture was regarded as so significant that President Bush greeted it with relief and triumph, describing him as 'one of the world's most lethal terrorists' (CNN.com 2004).

In November 2005 Indonesia's counter-terrorism forces tracked down and in a shoot-out killed JI leader and bomb maker Azahari Husin, a former Malaysian university lecturer, who was believed to have been the mastermind behind JI terrorist attacks (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2005). In January 2007 police raids and shoot-outs in Poso, in Sulawesi, led to the deaths of 17 alleged JI operatives and the arrest of more than 20 others. Information recovered in Poso led to more raids in March in Java, where a number of JI operatives were arrested, and bombs and

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weapons recovered. Investigations revealed that the JI had planned to assassinate police officers, prosecutors and judges. The Poso operations also led to the arrest in June 2007 of another key JI leader, Abu Dujana (ICG 2007: 2). In July 2008 regional police co-operation led to the arrest of a cell consisting of 10 militants led by a Singaporean, which had planned to bomb a café frequented by Westerners in Sumatra, in Indonesia. Police also recovered 22 bombs, explosive materials and several hand grenades (*Bangkok Post* 2008).

However, the JI managed to pull off the bombings of two Western hotels in Jakarta in July 2009—the Ritz-Carlton and the Marriott—the first successful terrorist attack in four years. The two suicide bombers had checked into the hotel as paying guests and then assembled the bombs in their hotel rooms. A key target was a business meeting of Western business executives. In all, nine people including the two suicide bombers were killed, and more than 50 people injured (Reuters 2009). Despite the relatively low number of casualties, the impact could be said to be high, as the suicide bombings took place despite heightened security measures at both hotels. Amongst the dead were four senior business executives from Australia and New Zealand. Eight US citizens were amongst the injured. A follow-up raid in West Java by police in August uncovered a plot to kill President Bambang Yudhoyono using a car bomb to attack his motorcade, a telling indication that the threat was not just directed at Westerners but aimed at sowing instability that could somehow pave the way for an Islamic state in Indonesia (Krqe.com 2010).

Indonesian counter-terrorism police then scored another success when they finally located and killed in a shoot-out Noordin Mohammed Top, a Malaysian and key bomb maker for the JI, in Central Java in September 2009. More significantly, Noordin was the leader of the JI wing known as al-Qa'ida in the Malay Archipelago, indicating that this group had fully embraced al-Qa'ida's global *jihad* (News.com.au 2009).

This counter-terrorism success was followed by the much more significant police raids in February 2010 in Aceh which led to the arrest of suspected militants and the recovery of weapons and documents from a JI training camp. The ramifications of this discovery have been significant. Investigations indicated that the JI was planning to attack regional targets, which included a major train subway station in Singapore and Manila's international airport (BBC News 2010). More disturbing were the JI's plans to launch a series of attacks in Indonesia itself. These included a plan to assassinate the President during the 17 August independence day ceremony, a Mumbai-style attack on hotels targeting Westerners, and a subsequent declaration of an Islamic state. The information recovered from the training camp in Aceh led to a series of counter-terrorism operations which resulted in the arrest or death of a number of suspected militants (Krqe.com 2010). They included a shoot-out in March, which led to the killing of another key JI leader, Dulmatin, a development so significant that it was personally announced by President Yudhoyono (*The Telegraph* 2010).

The radical problem in Indonesia

Despite the successes of counter-terrorism operations in Indonesia, there is increasing realization that the radical problem is much broader than the JI. This is owing to the broad diffusion of radical ideology and the presence of other radical networks (Fealy 2005).

Some of these non-JI radical groups and networks became more prominent as a result of the Christian-Muslim sectarian conflict in 1999–2002 in the Indonesian islands of Sulawesi and Maluku. Sectarian conflict between local Christians and migrant Muslims from Java, sparked by the severe economic crisis accompanying the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, led to a state of civil war that ultimately claimed the lives of over 10,000 people. Radical Islamist groups saw

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this conflict as an important *jihadist* training ground that could nurture the ideal and eventually pave the way for an Islamic state in Indonesia.

Radical groups that took part in the sectarian violence in the islands included the Laskar Jihad (since disbanded), Darul Islam, the Laskar Jundullah, the Laskar Mujahidin and the Mujahidin KOMPAK (the military wing of a Islamic charity). The Darul Islam, which carried out its armed rebellion in the 1950s aimed at establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia, had gone underground after its defeat. Indeed, not only have Darul Islam members been involved in the sectarian conflict in Sulawesi and Maluku, but they have also joined the JI in carrying out various attacks (Fealy 2007: 70).

There has also been the presence of the Majelis Mujahidin of Indonesia (MMI), an umbrella organization linking radical groups in Indonesia established by Abu Bakar Bashir, the JI's alleged spiritual leader, in 1999 (Abuza 2002: 19). The MMI also engaged in proselytizing, the spread of radical ideology and the promotion of an Islamic state, though it stresses that it is committed to doing so through peaceful means. Abu Bakar Bashir was arrested in 2002 but was released in 2006 following the Indonesian Supreme Court's ruling overturning his conviction (VOA News 2006). Upon his release, he left the MMI in July 2008 and established a new group, known as the Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) (Arianti and Astuti 2008). The fallout of the discovery of the JI training camp in Aceh in 2010 has affected Abu Bakar Bashir, who was arrested in August for his alleged involvement (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2010). Bashir was subsequently sentenced to 15 years in prison. In addition, over 200 suspected militants had been arrested or killed by mid-2012 as a result of the Aceh operation. These events had the effect of galvanizing militants on the run as well as others. Instead of being cowered into submission, the police operations have inspired a new wave of terrorist activity motivated by the desire for revenge (ICG 2012). In 2011 a police mosque in Cirebon and an evangelical Christian church in Solo were attacked, demonstrating the continuing challenge from terrorism.

The presence of other radical groups and networks other than the JI indicates that the problem of radical Islamist terrorism is much wider and broader than the JI. Indeed, there has been concern over the open proselytizing, spread of radical ideology and recruitment of radical activists by such groups, activities that are difficult to monitor or control in the context of a post-Suharto democracy. More seriously, the ideal of an Islamic state has remained persistent, and it is noteworthy that this dynamic was present long before al-Qa'ida's appearance in the region.

The radical problem in Malaysia

Apart from Indonesia, Malaysia has also faced ongoing security challenges from violent militant groups, though not on the same scale. In 1980, militants attacked a police station in Johore as part of their quest to start a holy war that would lead to an Islamic state in Malaysia. In 1985 a clash between security forces and a group of militants in Memali, in Kedah, led to the deaths of 18 people (Tan 2000: 97). In 2000 members of a militant group, the al-Ma'unah, raided a military armoury in Sauk, in Perak, as the start of a holy war which they hoped would lead to an Islamic state. They fled with automatic weapons, grenade launchers and ammunition, but were subsequently tracked down and overpowered by army commandos (BBC News 2000).

In December 2000 members of a local militant network, the Kampulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM), robbed a bank in Petaling Jaya. A second attempted robbery in May 2001 ended with one of the militants shot dead, and the rest detained. This led to the unmasking of the KMM network, the further arrest of 84 alleged militants, and the recovery of training manuals covering topics such as weapons training, intelligence collection and guerrilla warfare tactics. Investigations revealed that the KMM had aimed to establish a pan-Islamic state comprising

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Indonesia, Malaysia and the southern Philippines. The KMM had also been involved in a string of previous crimes, such as the murder of a local Christian politician, an attack on a police station, and the bombings of a church and a Hindu temple (Noor 2007: 167–68). It was little wonder, therefore, that the then Defence Minister Tun Najib (now Prime Minister) openly identified Islamist militancy as Malaysia's greatest internal security threat (*Straits Times* 2003).

After 9–11, linkages began to surface with al-Qa'ida. In January 2002 13 suspected militants were arrested in Malaysia as part of investigations into linkages with Zacarias Moussaoui (the so-called 20th hijacker), who was arrested in the USA after 9–11 for his role in the bombings (*The Independent* 2002). Some of the 9–11 bombers had also been to Malaysia, where a meeting was hosted in 2000 by a Malaysian, Yazid Sufaat, a JI/KMM member who was allegedly tasked by al-Qa'ida to develop anthrax as a biological weapon (Jocelyn 2008). It thus became clear that the JI, KMM and al-Qa'ida had established linkages and were co-operating in planning terrorist attacks.

In contrast to the initial slowness of the Indonesian government and security services in dealing with the terrorist problem (until the Bali bombing in 2002), however, the Malaysian authorities have been consistently vigilant and have not hesitated to take into pre-emptive detention anyone suspected of being involved in militant activities. Preventive detention was originally enacted in 1948 by the British to deal with communist insurgents and their supporters, and was later institutionalized as the Internal Security Act of 1960.

Muslim rebellion in the Philippines

The problem of Muslim alienation and rebellion in the Philippines is somewhat more complex than that of Indonesia and Malaysia, where the majority of the population are Muslims. A predominantly Catholic country, there exists a substantial Muslim minority in the southern provinces, which have long refused to accept the legitimacy of the Catholic-dominated Philippine state. The Philippines is also an interesting case study on the essentially local roots of Muslim alienation in the region, which long predated al-Qa'ida, as well as the tensions between the ethno-nationalist impulse that exists in the Malay archipelago, versus the call to global *jihad* against the West issued by al-Qa'ida. In the case of long-standing insurgencies, such as in the southern Philippines, al-Qa'ida had clearly hoped to exploit local grievances to advance its cause but the evidence shows that it has had very mixed success in penetrating and co-opting such groups, since it has to overcome what has so far been a much stronger ethno-nationalist impulse.

The roots of the Moro Muslim rebellion in the Philippines can be traced historically to the arrival of the Spaniards in the 16th century and the incomplete Catholicization of the islands. The influx of Catholic settlers from the north, which dominated the bureaucracy, economy and farming, led to Moro Muslims being displaced from their traditional land, resulting in much poverty and unemployment amongst them (Mercado 1984: 160–75). The Moro Muslims were overwhelmed by the migrants, with its proportion of the population in Mindanao declining from 76% in the 1900s to 20% in the 1990s (Banlaoi 2007: 198).

In 1972 the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), led by Nur Misuari, a left-wing activist from the University of the Philippines, began a long and protracted guerrilla war of independence on behalf of the Moro people. A split within the MNLF led to the emergence of the more overtly religious Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1984. It was led by Hashim Selamat, a religious scholar trained at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt (Tan 2005: 182). The MILF grew rapidly, and with the support of religious leaders, established control over large parts of Mindanao (*Far Eastern Economic Review* 1995). During the 1990s, the MILF also accepted assistance from al-Qa'ida, which provided some funding through Osama bin Laden's

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brother-in-law who ran a Muslim charity in Manila (Reeve 1999: 72–73). The MILF also hosted regional training camps where al-Qa'ida imparted military and terrorist skills to regional militants (Gunaratna 2002: 183–84).

After the terrorist attacks on 9–11 in the USA, however, the MILF leadership took stock of the situation and made the decision to sever links with al-Qa'ida. The MILF concluded that its main objective was the creation of an independent Moro homeland, not participation in al-Qa'ida's global *jihad* against the West. Moreover, such an alliance with al-Qa'ida would be counter-productive if it meant having to fight not just the central government but also the USA. The US-led Operation Enduring Freedom had, after all, swiftly ejected the Taliban regime from Kabul in Afghanistan in late 2001. The MILF thus distanced itself from al-Qa'ida, openly emphasizing nationalist objectives and downplaying the role of religion in its struggle. In March 2002 the MILF described itself as a 'legitimate liberation organization', that it 'counted on committed members who are not fanatical about their religion', and that it 'would not support any extremist group that used religious faith as a tool for terrorist activities' (*Mindanao Times Interactive News* 2002).

However, the subsequent failure to conclude a binding peace agreement, given the complex situation in the Mindanao on account of its Catholic majority which opposes concessions to the Muslims, has meant periodic cease-fires alternating with periods of fighting. Moreover, there exist far more uncompromising groups, such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Founded by ex-Afghan *mujahidin* volunteers in 1991, the group takes its name from Abu Sayyaf Rasool, a hero of the Afghan war against the Soviets in the 1980s, and a close ally of Osama bin Laden. The ASG believes that violent action is the only solution to the Moro problem, and aims to establish an Islamic state run strictly according to the *Shari'a* (Bergen 2001: 237–38).

The ASG developed strong connections with al-Qa'ida, which provided funding for its activities (Reeve 1999: 72–73). Al-Qa'ida also provided terrorist training, through Ramzi Yousef, the first World Trade Center bomber in 1993. However, a fire in his Manila flat in 1995 led to the security services recovering material which revealed details of Operation Bojinka, involving an al-Qa'ida plot to bomb 11 US airliners in the Asia-Pacific using liquid explosives (*The Wall Street Journal* 2001). The aborted Bojinka template was used later in 2006 in Britain, which has led to permanent world-wide restrictions on the carriage of liquids onto the cabin of commercial aircraft (BBC News 2006).

In the Philippines, the ASG carried out bombings, assassinations, extortion and kidnapping for ransom activities. In 2000 it carried out the kidnapping of 21 people, including Western tourists, from the Malaysian island resort of Sipadan, as well as bombed the Philippine Embassy in Jakarta. In February 2004 the ASG and the JI carried out the deadly bombing of a ferry in Manila Bay, killing 116 people (BBC News 2004). As a result of numerous terrorist attacks from the MILF, the ASG and the Maoist New People's Army, security in the Philippines has been significantly tightened, to an extent not seen elsewhere in the region, with security checks at shopping malls, airports, ferry terminals, hotels and government installations.

Countering terrorism in the Malay archipelago

The Malay archipelago is home to the world's largest population of Muslims and considered a strategic battleground in the global fight against al-Qa'ida's radical ideology which champions a global *jihad* against the West. Thus, after the events of 9–11, the USA opened a so-called 'second front' in this region in early 2002, to accompany its despatch of troops to Afghanistan. The unmasking of the hitherto secretive al-Qa'ida-linked terrorist network the JI led to counter-terrorism action that has resulted in hundreds of alleged operatives arrested or killed throughout the region.

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The events of 9–11 were recognized within the region as posing a transnational global security challenge, epitomized by the Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in November 2001. In May 2002 the ASEAN states also agreed on an Action Plan, which would establish uniform laws for countering terrorism and improve regional intelligence co-operation. Regional co-operation was stepped up following the Bali attacks in 2002, with an agreement to establish a Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) in Kuala Lumpur, in Malaysia. In January 2007 the leaders of ASEAN also agreed upon a convention on counter-terrorism co-operation. ASEAN also signed joint declarations on countering terrorism with its dialogue partners—the USA, Japan, Australia and the European Union.

Efforts have also been made to improve the capacity for counter-terrorism. Apart from the SEARCCT, Indonesia also established, with the assistance of Australia, the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Co-operation (CLEC), as well as two intelligence universities to train its counter-terrorism forces (*The Times Higher Education* 2003). In addition, Indonesia set up an elite counter-terrorism force, known as Densus (or Detachment) 88, which has been responsible for many counter-terrorism successes since it became operational in 2003.

The Philippines government has also adopted a comprehensive strategy to deal with the multi-faceted security challenges emanating from various insurgencies in the country. It adopted a 16-point Counter-Terrorism Programme in 2005, and passed the Human Security Act of 2007. These underpin a comprehensive and strategic approach through the use of political, diplomatic and economic instruments to address the fundamental, root causes of conflict in the Philippines. An Anti-Terrorism Council has also been established to improve interagency co-operation and ensure a whole-of-government approach to the problem of terrorism (Lomibao 2008: 4–7).

As a result of the above, the capacity of regional states in dealing with the terrorism problem has shown improvement. This is demonstrated by the string of counter-terrorism successes in Indonesia, the success in pre-emptive measures in Malaysia and Singapore, and the improved climate for peace negotiations with moderate insurgents in the southern Philippines. In Indonesia, the string of deadly terrorist attacks which has killed many local Indonesians has also left radical groups with little popular sympathy. Overall, the threat of radical Islamist terrorism in the region, which appeared to be an emerging challenge following the deadly Bali attack in 2002, appears to have somewhat diminished, given the general decline in terrorist incidences.

However, a number of factors mitigate against undue optimism. The discovery of a JI training camp in Aceh in 2009 and the hotel bombings in Jakarta in 2010 indicate that the danger is real and that continued vigilance will be needed. Another concern is the fact that the JI has adapted by recruiting and organizing outside its own structures, using links it has developed with other radical groups. The spread of radical ideology, which is difficult to control let alone curb in a democratic Indonesia, has meant that there is a steady supply of recruits to the radical cause.

The cause of radical Islamism has also been facilitated by the desire for martyrdom, the availability of terrorist expertise, the apparent ease in obtaining material for constructing bombs, and the presence of fundamental grievances amongst some sections of the community. Indeed, the persistence of the ideal of an Islamic state ruled according to Islamic laws is an indication of enduring issues relating to the legitimacy of the post-independence order. Indeed, the radical Islamists adopt a long-term, generational perspective in the pursuit of the objective of an Islamic state, which they believe will solve all the political, social and economic ills that afflict the secular state, and usher in a new age of Islamic renaissance.

Externally, Western policies in the Middle East and elsewhere, which have contributed to the narrative of Islam under threat and therefore requiring its defence, have boosted the claims

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of radical ideology in the context of the growing sense of the world-wide Muslim community or *umma*. There remains deep resentment amongst many Muslims in the region at being singled out by the West. This is reflected in the popularity of various conspiracy theories in Indonesia. Many Indonesians, for instance, believe that the various terrorist attacks in Indonesia since 9–11 have been Western or Israeli intelligence operations aimed at justifying a crackdown on Muslim opposition, and forcing the region to join the US-led global war on terrorism (Hafidz 2003: 391).

The long-term, ideological nature of the radical Islamist challenge has led states in the Malay archipelago to adopt more comprehensive strategies, as the Philippines has done, aimed at resolving underlying causes of alienation which have led to the resort to violence. Governments in the region are also generally sensitive in avoiding the perception of mistreatment that alienates local Muslims, thereby worsening the problem of terrorism. Thus, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have adopted religious rehabilitation towards captured militants as an important component of their comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism, designed to win the hearts and minds of the population, and isolate the militants. The objective of the states involved is therefore not 'victory' but a more realistic one of containment. After all, terrorism in this part of the world has been an enduring and historical social phenomenon, caused by the presence of fundamental grievances, a strong sense of alienation and continued questions regarding the legitimacy of the state amongst sections of the community.

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