

**COMPREHENDING COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA: A STUDY ON
INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the counterterrorism strategy of Indonesian and Malaysian governments with a view to elucidate the extent to which the process of using all instruments of national power has predisposed states' response to *Jihadi-Salafi* inspired terrorism to preserve their security in the international system on the basis of Self-Defense principle. On that account, this study explores the growing threat of global Islamist terrorism in Southeast Asia since the event of the 9/11 attacks on United States with a particular focus on the ISIS phenomenon and its implication to the states' national security. It also examines the current counterterrorism practices applied by both governments and make inquiry to what extent the existing counterterrorism strategy in both countries has sufficiently developed and firmly enforced to address the evolving threat of *Jihadi-Salafism* terrorism. This study uses qualitative research methodology in which it substantively engages in primary and secondary data collection. Primary data were obtained from the interviews with individuals from the government that are responsible in the implementation of counterterrorism measures and academia involves in terrorism study. Direct Content Analysis is used to test validity of the data from the standpoint of Cognitive Theory of Terrorism, Neorealism approach of National Security, and the concept of National Strategy. Data analysis is then conducted by linking the research questions with the findings. This study found that both states have taken strong kinetic measures to eliminate terrorist networks and activities as well as to mitigate the risk of terrorist attacks based on the criminal-justice framework. Nevertheless, as this study observed, the governments appear reluctant to embrace the other instruments of national power to develop a more effective national counterterrorism strategy and policy framework. Although the law-enforcement operations, which have been the strength of two countries, have successfully reduced the risk of terrorist attacks in both countries, finding of this research also highlights governments' weak interest to address the root cause of radical *Salafism* that has notably gained influence among the Muslim population especially in Indonesia. Whilst the security community in both states has acknowledged the evolving characters of terrorism following the rise of ISIS, government engagement in the battle of idea to counter radical *Jihadi-Salafism* in both countries appears obscure.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti strategi kerajaan Indonesia and Malaysia dalam menangani terorisme dengan tujuan untuk memahami sejauh mana proses penggunaan instrumen kekuasaan nasional mempengaruhi kecenderungan tindak balas kerajaan terhadap isu-isu keganasan yang dipengaruhi oleh ideologi Salafi-Jihadi untuk melestarikan keselamatan negara didalam sistem antarabangsa, berdasarkan prinsip *'Self-Defense'*. Kajian ini meneroka penularan dan peningkatan ancaman ideologi Salafi-Jihadi dan rangkaian terroris global di rantau Asia Tenggara sejak berlakunya serangan pengganas 9/11 ke atas Amerika Syarikat, khususnya fenomena ISIS dan implikasi gerakan tersebut terhadap keselamatan negara. Kajian ini juga meneliti langkah-langkah yang telah diambil oleh kedua-dua kerajaan dalam menangani ancaman tersebut dan menilai sejauh mana strategi yang diguna pakai di kedua-dua negara dibangunkan dengan secukupnya dan dilaksanakan dengan mapan bagi melawan ancaman keganasan yang diinspirasikan oleh ideologi Salafi-Jihadi yang semakin menular. Kajian ini menggunakan metodologi penyelidikan kualitatif yang melibatkan pengumpulan data primer dan sekunder secara substantif. Data-data primer diperolehi melalui wawancara dengan individu-individu dari pelbagai agensi kerajaan yang terlibat dengan inisiatif-inisiatif melawan keganasan dan ahli akademik yang terlibat dengan penyelidikan keganasan. Metod *Direct Content Analysis* digunakan untuk mengesahkan data-data yang dikumpul berdasarkan Teori Kognitif Sosial dalam memahami Keganasan yang diinspirasikan oleh Salafi-Jihadi, kerangka pendekatan Neorealisme terhadap Keselamatan Nasional serta konsep Strategi Nasional. Analisis dilakukan dengan menghubungkan persoalan-persoalan kajian dengan penemuan kajian. Kajian ini mendapati kedua-dua negara telah mengambil langkah-langkah kinetik yang keras untuk menangani rangkaian dan aktiviti keganasan, dan mengurangkan risiko serangan pengganas berdasarkan kerangka *'criminal-justice'* yang diguna pakai oleh kerajaan. Namun begitu, seperti yang diteliti dalam kajian ini, kerajaan dilihat enggan menggunakan instrumen-instrumen kekuasaan negara yang lain bagi mengembangkan strategi nasional dan membangunkan kerangka dasar awam untuk melawan keganasan dengan lebih efektif. Walaupun penguatkuasaan undang-undang di kedua-dua negara berjaya mengurangkan risiko serangan pengganas, hasil penyelidikan ini juga mendapati komitmen kedua-dua kerajaan yang rendah dalam menangani punca-punca penularan ideologi Salafi radikal dalam kalangan Muslim terutamanya di Indonesia. Meskipun komuniti keselamatan di kedua-dua negara mengakui ancaman terorisme semakin berkembang berikutan penularan gerakan ISIS, penglibatan kerajaan didalam perang melawan ideologi Jihadi-Salafi terlihat kabur.

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APPROVAL

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I hereby declare this thesis is my original work except for quotations and summary of references which have been duly cited.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AMLA	Anti-Money Laundering Act 2001(Revised 2003)
AMLATFA	Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act 2001
AML/CFT	Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism Policy (AML/CFT) for Digital Currencies
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASG	Abu Sayaff Group
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQC	Al-Qaeda Central
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BAINTELKAM	Badan Intelijen Keamanan
BAIS	Badan Inteligen Strategis
BIN	Badan Inteligen Negara
BNPT	Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme/National Counterterrorism Agency
CPM	Communist Party of Malaysia
CCF	Counterterrorism Coordination Forum

CTCD	Counterterrorism Coordinating Desk
DI	Darul Islam
DIM	Darul Islam Malizia
EU	European Union
DSCD	Digital Strategic Communications Division
FAKSI	Forum Aktivist Syariat Islam/Islam Sharia Activists Forum
FTF	Foreign Terrorist Fighters
FPI	Front Pembela Islam
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka
HTI	Hizbur Tahrir of Indonesia
IKIM	Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia
IKSIM	Institute of Islamic Strategic Research Malaysia
ISA	Internal Security Act 1960
IRI	International Republican Institute
ISI	Islamic State in Iraq
ISIL/ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/Syria or <i>Al-Dawla Al-Islamiya fi Al-Iraq wa Al-Sham</i> (DAESH)

IPAC	Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict
JAD	Jamaah Ansharut Daulah
JAKIM	Malaysian Department Islamic Development
JAT	Jama'ah Anshorut Tauhid
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
KESBAN	Keselamatan dan Pembangunan/ Defence and Development
KOPASSUS	Komando Pasukan Khusus/ Special Force Command
KOOPSUSGAB	Komando Operasi Khusus Gabungan/ Joint Special Operation Command
KPK	Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi
KMM	Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia
KOMINDA	Komunitas Intelijen Daerah
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMT	International Monitoring Team
INTRACT	Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
MAF	Malaysian Armed Forces
MCMC	Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission
MMI	Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MIT	Muhajeedin Indonesia Timur
MOOTW	Military Operation Other Than War
MNLF	National Liberation Front
MNSC	Malaysia's National Security Council
MPC	Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre
MPLA	Malayan People's Liberation Army
MSM	Majlis Shura al-Mujahideen
NSOF	National Special Operation Force
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional
PAS	Parti Islam SeMalaysia
PASKAL	Special Operation Force of Royal Malaysian Navy
PASKAU	Special Operation Force of the Royal Malaysian Air Force
PGK	Pasukan Gerakan Khas/ Special Operation Command
PKS	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
POLRI	Police of Republic Indonesia

POTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015
POCA	Prevention of Crime Act 1959 (revised 2015)
PH	Pakatan Harapan
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)
C/PVE	Counter/Prevention Violent Extremism
RMP	Royal Malaysian Police
SB	Special Branch
SEARCCT	Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counterterrorism
SMATA	Terrorism in Foreign Countries Act 2015
SOSMA	Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012
SUARAM	Suara Rakyat Malaysia
SUHAKAM	Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia/ Human Rights Commission of Malaysia
TNI	Tentera Nasional Indonesia
US	United States
UI	Universitas Indonesia
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UNDP	United Nation Development Plan

UNMT	United Nation Monitoring Team
UTK	Unit Tindakan Khas/Special Action Unit
VPN	Virtual Private Network

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States of America in 2001 was a climacteric event of the 21st century global security landscape. The attacks exhibit a new form of global security threat that challenges the traditional notion of relations between states and how they respond to the post-modern terror activities. The unprecedented attacks have significantly shaped the post-Cold War geopolitical context and revealed the world's new enemy, Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization with a dispersed and globalized network of insurgents aims to alter the course of global history through its radical ideology and deliberate asymmetrical attacks targeting civilians which is arduous to be halted or prevented by means of traditional military approach. Aiming at replacing the Westphalian state system with Islamic governance system, Al-Qaeda emerged as a principal threat to the global political stability and broadly defined the theme of global security issues in the first decade of the century.¹

¹ Westphalian state system originates from the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648 which generally held to mean a system of states or international society comprising sovereign state entities possessing the monopoly of force within their mutually recognized territories. Relations between states are conducted by means of formal diplomatic ties between heads of state and governments, and

Unlike the previous terrorist groups, Al-Qaeda successfully transformed itself from the militant legacy of the Soviet-Afghan War into an unpredictable threat to the global security (Gunaratna, 2005). The group leveraged the tools of globalization by exploiting modern technologies and open borders to spread its influence and carry out attacks around the world. Communication technologies such as the Internet, mobile phones, e-mail, instant messaging, and global business model were utilized to expand its geographical footprints that consequently created a phenomenon of global-networked, cell-based, religiously and ideologically motivated terrorism (Huntington, 2004). According to Katzman (2005), Al-Qaeda's cells and operatives exist in over 70 countries to run various terror-related activities and the organization's operations including administrative tasks, coordination of missions and communication between members, and recruitment of new adherents.

Correspondingly, the 9/11 attacks on the United States (US) created a ground for offensive retaliation by the US government which largely defined the country's foreign policy over the course of 15 years. Subsequently, after the attacks, the US government launched the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), a massive military campaign against Al-Qaeda with its coalition member states including the Muslim majority countries.² Arguably, self-defense was the *raison d'état* for the

international law consists of treaties made (and broken) by those sovereign entities. The term implies a separation of the domestic and international spheres, such that states may not legitimately intervene in the domestic affairs of another, whether in the pursuit of self-interest or by appeal to a higher notion of sovereignty, be it religion, ideology, or other supranational ideal. In this sense the term differentiates the 'modern' state system from earlier models, such as the Holy Roman Empire or the Ottoman Empire (McLean and McMillan, 2009).

² The Global War On Terrorism (GWOT) is a set of the US policy response to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, which in the view of Jackson (2005), a sequence of institutional practices including military intelligence operation, diplomatic initiatives, establishment of special government departments and security bodies, specific standard operating procedures and legislations; with an accompanying set of political narratives. Record (2003) argued the GWOT

intervention. By targeting Taliban's operating base in Afghanistan and invading Iraq in 2003, the US government put forth a doctrine of pre-emptive action against Al-Qaeda by killing the terrorist suspects and destroying their base operations with the aim to eliminate their ability to conduct terrorist attacks. Within the GWOT strategy framework, the US government also invested heavily in addressing the fundamental causes of terrorism through the promotion of democracy and supporting nation-building of the weak states or unstable governments to encourage development of potential allies.

The effectiveness of the US's military response to counter the global threat of terror, however, was contested and highly criticized. As Rogers (2009) argued, the approach "was wrong, dangerous and could prove highly counterproductive to US security interests and would certainly do little to promote international peace and stability". The US military instrument is overstretched, Al-Qaeda is however, far from defeated. Worse still, the number of Islamist-inspired attacks and the proliferation of Islamist terrorist groups as a result of GWOT has skyrocketed,

lacks strategic clarity, embraces unrealistic objectives, and may not be sustainable over the long haul based on his reasoning of (1) the Bush administration's postulation of the terrorist threat, (2) the scope and feasibility of U.S. war aims, and (3) the war's political, fiscal, and military sustainability.

Significantly, the heinous attacks necessitated a major shift in the US's military strategy and compelled Bush Administration to also develop a new national security strategy in 2002 – shifting the government conventional response to terrorist attacks on the state and its citizens from passive to pre-emptive, which considered as the most fundamental reshaping of American Containment grand strategy since 1947. To gain political legitimacy of the war, Bush Administration conducted a major communications campaign targeting the media and its citizens to explain the change. Phrases such as "help make the world not just safer but better" and "prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends, with weapons of mass destruction", as well as security concepts such as 'rogue state', 'imminent threat' and 'anticipatory self-defense' were used to justify the new strategy and the global military campaign including the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003, while jihadist terrorist and violent extremism were used to describe the perpetrators of 9/11 attacks (Fish, McCraw and Reddish, 2004).

especially in Iraq, Nigeria, and Afghanistan especially during the glory days of Al-Qaeda and ISIS.

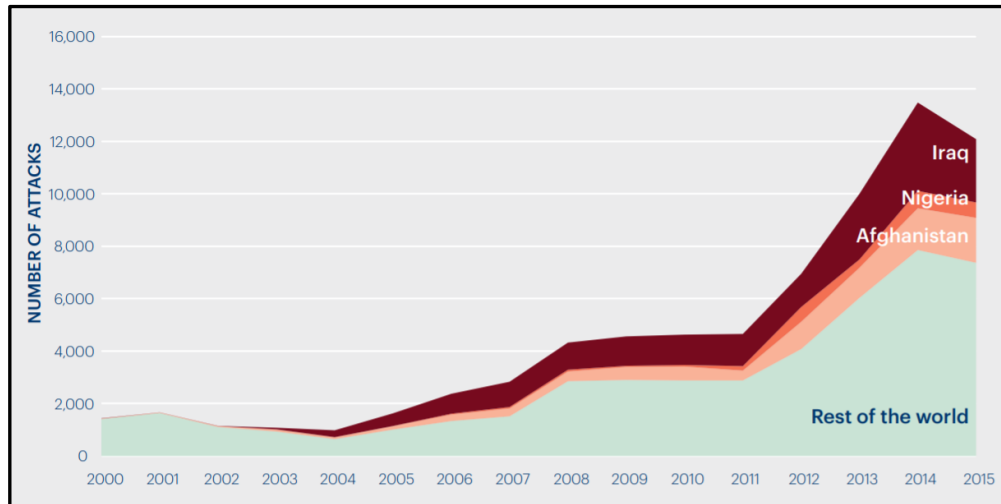


Diagram 1.1: Number of terrorist attacks worldwide between 2000-2015
Source: Global Terrorism Index 2016, economicsandpeace.org

The emergence of a highly clandestine organization known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) in 2014, indicates that the threat of global terrorism is exacerbated (Gunaratna, 2016). ISIS attracted worldwide attention through a series of conquests of Iraq and Syria's territories, followed with the proclamation of a self-styled 'Caliphate' led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Quivooij 2015).

Commonly transliterated as *al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham* (Daesh), the group manifested the enormity of global terrorism phenomenon, outperformed its precursor, Al-Qaeda with estimated 80,000 fighters. ISIS emulated the conventional armies of which its underground cells served as military division – organized in battalions and brigades, equipped with high-technological weapons and doctrinal manuals. Hit-and-run and guerrilla tactics were used in its military campaigns to conquer and hold territories in Syria and Iraq (Barret, 2014).

Gunaratna (2016) described ISIS and Al-Qaeda are cut from the same cloth – both groups are identical when it comes to ideology. ISIS supporters have significantly increased as the group acquired more territories where states failed to govern particularly in Iraq and Syria as well as other Muslim majority territories where local jihadist groups pledge allegiance to its leadership.

Both Al-Qaeda and ISIS exploited the situation of power vacuum, breakdown in governance, and civil wars especially across the Middle East and North Africa. The radical Islamist organizations successfully leveraged the situations to maneuver, unify, and inspire local jihadist militants around the world to instigate and coordinate attacks in their countries. Affiliates of Al-Qaeda such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), expand their area of operations and exploits political instability in the region originated by the Arab Spring movements in early 2010. ISIS which was originally part of AQI that occupies Sunni population in parts of Iraq and Syria. The establishment of new ‘provinces’ and attacks against the Shia minorities were also part of its attempt at regional destabilization. Recognizing the proven strength and ideological influence of ISIS, local jihadists and militant groups expressed pledges of allegiance to ISIS leadership. These include defectors from AQIM, AQAP, members of Libya and Sinai-based organizations, Nigeria’s Boko Haram leaders, and Pakistani and Afghan militants (Quivooij, 2015). In a short time, ISIS accomplished a tremendous track record in maintaining its presence in the occupied territories and expanding to other regions. The former United Nation Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon (2016) described, “the expansion of the ISIL/ISIS sphere of influence across the West and North Africa, the Middle East, and South

and Southeast Asia demonstrates the speed and scale at which the gravity of the threat has evolved in just 18 months.”

Southeast Asian countries hold a long history of political violence including religious inspired terrorism. The region has had numerous internal conflicts since decolonization period in which the legitimacy of states was questioned in the form of ethnic or religious secessionism and armed insurgencies by the groups that embrace different political ideology from the states. In spite of what had preceded, the emergence of Al-Qaeda and violence linked to global *Jihadi-Salafism* is relatively new. The attack on nightclubs in Bali in October 2002 which killed 202 mainly Australian tourists, has riveted the global security discourse of terrorism to the region. As highlighted by Rogozhina (2015), the region became a focal point where a concentration of Islamist terrorist and radical groups are supported and financed by Al-Qaeda in pursuing the goal of secession and overthrowing democratic governments particularly Indonesia.

The main terrorist vehicle in the region, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), at its peak between 2000-2002, was responsible for the Bali attacks and many other terrorist acts across the region (Singh, 2009). As reported by Indonesian and foreign intelligence, JI was believed to have established a symbiotic relationship with Al-Qaeda. The latter set up a base operation in the region and provided financial backing and logistical support to the group. During that period, JI members especially from Indonesia and Malaysia were sent to Afghanistan to receive combat training Al-Qaeda's main camp and fight along the Afghans waging jihad against the Soviet Union in the 1980s (Vaughn et. al, 2009). JI's vision to establish the pan-