Counterintelligence, Policy Recommendation and Military Convergence in Dealing with Current and Emerging Regional Implications of Jemaah Islamiyyah

Mohd Mizan Aslam[*1]**, Shushil Azam Shuib**[2]**, Syed Abdul Razak Sayed Mahadi**[3]

[1]*Universiti Pertahanan Malaysia,* Malaysia*, e-mail: mohdmizan@upnm.edu.my*
[2]*Ministry of Higher Education,* Malaysia*, e-mail: azam.shushilil@mohe.gov.my*
[3]*University of Malaya,* Malaysia*, e-mail: syedabdrazak@um.edu.my*
Corresponding Auhtors

Abstract

This study was conducted to seek reemerging threats of JI in recent years, counterintelligence taken by police and military convergence. Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) is an Islamist extremist group in Indonesia that seeks to overthrow the government and create a pan-Islamic state in Southeast Asia. It has ideological origins in the Darul Islam (DI) movement of the 1950s and 1960s, in which insurgents of West Javanese descent carried out a violent campaign that attempted to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia. Despite the arrest of more than 100 Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) members in the last two years, the militant organization appears resilient, partly due to its hierarchical organizational structure. Such a structure has enabled JI to have a strong agenda-setting capacity and exercise accountability and specialization within its hierarchy. This study is qualitative in nature. I conducted in-depth library and fieldwork research with former JI operatives and Police (POLRI & DENSUS 88, PDRM) officers. My findings show the survival patterns JI in the context of operations, which includes personal, political, economic, and community structure within their circle. To curb the threat of JI, I would like to suggest the Government of Indonesia and regional members devise an action plan to address the terrorist-related issues.

Keywords: Jemaah Islamiyyah, Al-Qaeda, Darul Islam, Islamic State (IS), Counterintelligence.

Abstrak

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mencari ancaman JI yang muncul semula dalam beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini, perisikan balas yang diambil oleh Polis dan konvergensi tentera. Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) adalah kumpulan ekstremis Islam di Indonesia yang berusaha untuk menggulingkan kerajaan dan mewujudkan negara pan-Islam di Asia Tenggara. Ia mempunyai asal-usul ideologi dalam gerakan Darul Islam (DI) pada tahun 1950-an dan 1960-an, di mana pemberontak berketurunan Jawa Barat melakukan kempen ganas yang cuba menubuhkan negara Islam di Indonesia. Walaupun lebih 100 anggota Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) ditahan sejak dua tahun lalu, pertubuhan militan itu kelihatan berdaya tahan, sebahagiannya disebabkan struktur organisasinya yang berhierarki. Struktur sedemikian telah membolehkan JI mempunyai kapasiti penetapan agenda yang kukuh dan melaksanakan akauntabiliti dan pengkhususan dalam hierarkinya. Kajian ini berbentuk kualitatif. Saya menjalankan penyelidikan perpustakaan dan kerja lapangan yang mendalam dengan bekas koperasi JI dan pegawai Polis (POLRI & DENSUS 88, PDRM). Penemuan saya menunjukkan corak survival JI dalam konteks operasi, yang merangkumi struktur peribadi, politik, ekonomi dan komuniti dalam kalangan mereka. Bagi membendung ancaman JI, saya ingin mencadangkan Kerajaan Indonesia dan anggota serantau membuat pelan tindakan untuk menangani isu berkaitan pengganas

Kata Kunci: *Jemaah Islamiyyah, Al-Qaeda, Darul Islam, Islamic State (IS), Counterintelligence.*

Background

A militant Islamist organization called Jemaah Islamiyah operates in Southeast Asia and employs terrorism to advance its agenda of establishing an Indonesia-centered Islamic state throughout the region. Both before and after the 9/11 attacks, JI has maintained a close

relationship with al Qaeda.[1] JI agents are allegedly responsible for large-scale bombing operations in Singapore and the Philippines recently.[2] The spiritual leader of the JI, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, is among the numerous JI leaders and followers who have been detained, tried, and sentenced to prison since 2001. Others have died while attempting to avoid capture. Major terrorist acts may still be carried out by the JI's surviving members, as evidenced by this.

Symonds (2003) says that Jemaah Islamiyah, which originates at the start of the 20th century, is the most extreme manifestation of a right-wing Islamist group in Indonesia today. The idea of returning to a purified Islam—the religion of the prophet and his followers—first emerged in the Middle East in the late nineteenth century. As a reaction to colonial dominance, it was later transported to Indonesia by a segment of the growing bourgeoisie. In what came to be known as "Modernist Islam," a religious resurgence and an effort to adopt modern science and technology were mixed unconventionally (Aslam, 2019).[3]

According to an expert from International Crisis Group, Sidney Jones (2010),[4] the most well-known terrorist group in Southeast Asia is Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). It is accountable for a string of explosions in Indonesia that began in May 2000 and continued through the September 2004 explosion in front of the Australian EEmbassy in Jakarta, either acting alone or in cooperation with other parties. Between 2000 and the beginning of 2005, several of significant bombs in the Philippines were carried out by JI members or JI-trained assailants. The Sari Club and Paddy's Bar bombings in Kuta, Bali, which resulted in the deaths of more than 200 people, were the

bombings created by JI's explosives experts with the intention of killing civilians. JI was formally added to the United Nations' list of terrorist organizations following the Bali bombing incident.

However, the scale of the Bali bombing has caused perceptions of JI to become stuck in a 2001–2002 time frame. Two and a half years after the Bali bombings, what was previously known or believed to be true about JI is now so widely accepted as truth that there is no debate in the media or academic studies on how JI might have altered. Even before the massive crackdown that started in Singapore and Malaysia in late 2001 and continued in Indonesia after Bali, it would have been a mistake to consider it fixed. However, the arrests have compelled adjustments to be made in training, leadership, and organization structures, so what was true of JI in mid-2002 might not be accurate in mid-2005. Any appraisal of the risks JI poses will be fundamentally wrong unless it is regarded as dynamic.

According to Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia (2022),[5] a week after the Bali attacks, Indonesian police arrested Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir, the spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiyah and one of its founders. Although he was detained in relation to another set of terrorist acts, he was suspected of being involved in the Bali bombings. Bashir was found guilty of conspiring in the Bali attacks of 2002 and given a two-and-a-half-year prison term in March 2005. Then, The Indonesian Supreme Court reversed his sentence in December 2006, and he was released in June 2006[6]. In the months that followed, throughout Southeast Asia, more than 30 additional persons were detained on suspicion of taking part in the Bali attacks.

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[1] J. Baylis, S. Smith, P. Owens, *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 12.

[2] Avishag G., 'Terrorism on the Internet: Discovering the Unsought', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 9. 4 (2007), 159-165.

[3] M.M., Aslam, & Gunaratna, R., *Terrorists Rehabilitation and Community Engagement in Malaysia and Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2019).

[4] Quinton Temby, *Terrorism In Indonesia After "Islamic State"* (Singapore: ISEAS -Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020).

[5] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia. "2002 Bali Bombings". *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 4 Oct. 2022, https://www.britannica.com/event/2002-Bali-Bombings. Accessed 28 December 2022

[6] M.M Aslam,., 'A Critical Study of Kumpulan Militan Malaysia, Its Wider Connections in The Region and The Mplications of Radical Islam for The Stabilitiy of South East Asia' *Ph.D Thesis*, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, 2009.

Imam Samudra, the mastermind of the Bali terrorist attack, was apprehended in November 2002 and given a death sentence a year later. He acknowledged his role in the attacks and asserted his obligation as a Muslim to combat non-Muslims. Ali Ghufron, commonly known as Mukhlas, was detained in Java in December 2002. He said that he had helped with the planning of the Bali bombings, mostly in the capacity of a spiritual advisor, and had enlisted the assistance of two of his brothers (Ali Imron and Amrozi bin Nurhasyim) in order to put the explosives together and transport them. He and bin Nurhasyim received death sentences, while Imron apologized and received a life term.[7] Azahari Husin and Dulmatin, two further men who were thought to have built and detonated the bombs, were slain during police raids. The firing squad executions of Samudra, bin Nurhasyim, and Ghufron on November 9, 2008, led to fights between police and the three men's admirers, many of whom praised them as martyrs and heroes (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia 2022).

The Current Terrorist Threat

The threat of terrorism from Islamic State (IS) followers is very high in Indonesia. However, the threat is lessened by continuing counter-terrorism operations that have weakened Jamaah Anshorul Daulah, the main pro-IS alliance in Indonesia. Pro-IS features can be found practically everywhere throughout the Indonesian archipelago. However, in the absence of a hierarchy and coherent structure, militants have been reduced to essentially autonomous and regional cells and networks. They are becoming increasingly dependent on Internet communications.[8] Although *Jamaah Anshorut*

Daulah (JAD) is now the most threatening organization, Indonesia's jihadist landscape is filled by numerous other major groups, some of which support Islamic State. In contrast, others either oppose or conflict with it (Putra, I.E, 2013).[9]

According to Temby, Q. (2020), there are two types of terrorist threats in Indonesia which are as follows: *Firth*, **Pro-IS Militants**[10] The *Jamaah Anshorul Daulah* (Community of the Helpers of the State; JAD). JAD is an umbrella organisation of pro-Islamic State militants primarily found on Java island in largely independent clusters. It was formerly managed by Aman Abdurrahman, the most prominent pro-IS preacher in Indonesia. The bombing of Jakarta's Jalan Thamrin (Starbucks) on January 14, 2016, the Kampung Malayu incident on May 24, 2017, and the attacks in Surabaya on May 13, 2018, all appear to have been carried out by JAD members. Members took part in the Marawi siege as well. The official organization of the group appears to have been destroyed by widespread police arrests in the wake of the Surabaya bombings. (Also called JAKI; Jamaah Ansharul Khilafah Islamiyah).

Jama'ah Anshur Tauhid (Community of the Helpers of Monotheism; JAT). Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, a former JI commander, founded the organization in 2008; it has offices all around the nation.[11] When Ba'asyir pledged his allegiance to IS, a sizable portion of the group disbanded to create Jamaah Anshorul Syariat (Community of the Sharia Helpers; JAS). *Timor Indonesia Mujahidin* (Mujahideen of Eastern Indonesia; MIT). MIT was the first Indonesian jihadist organisation to join IS in 2014, which first appeared as an Al-

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[7] Gunaratna, R., "Counterterrorism: ASEAN Militaries' Growing Role – Analysis." *RSIS Commentaries.* March 14. Accessed June 01, 2018. https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CO18042.pdf.

[8] Perry, M., & Latiff, R., 'After Baghdadi death, Southeast Asia expects long fight against Islamic state's influence'. *Reuters.* Retrieved on 31 October 2019 from

htpps://www/reuters/com

[9] Putra, I. E., & Sukabdi, Z., 'Basic Concepts and Reasons Behind The Emergence of Religious Terror Activities in Indonesia: An Inside View', *Asian Journal of Social Psychology,* 16.2 (2013), 83-91.

[10] Gunaratna, R., and Ali, M., *Terrorist Rehabilitation: A New Frontier In Counter-terrorism* (London: Imperial College Press, 2014).

[11] Sageman, M., *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004)

Qaeda branch in 2012. They are the first group to profess allegiance to Abu Ibrahim al Hashimi al Qurashi, the new IS caliph, in a video that was shared on Telegram in November 2019. MIT is frequently regarded as being the closest to establishing IS-held territory in Indonesia because of its location in the remote woods of Poso, Central Sulawesi, and the fact that it developed against a background of intergroup violence. However, the group's activity has significantly decreased since Santoso (also known as Abu Wardah), its commander, was assassinated in 2016 during extensive military and law enforcement operations.

Ring Banten. The ring, an extremely militant Islamic State of Indonesia (NII) offshoot, operates more like an informal network than a formal entity. Iwan Dharmawan (alias Rois), a Ring Banten leader currently serving time in prison for his role in the 2004 bombing of the Australian Embassy, is believed to have played a significant role in organizing recent jihadist activities, such as the Thamrin (Starbucks) attack, travel to Marawi, and travel to Syria.

Second, **Anti-IS militants**. *Jemaah Islamiyah* (Islamic Community). JI is reportedly the largest and best-organized militant Islamist group in Indonesia, with an estimated 10,000 members. It started as a faction of the Islamic State of Indonesia (Negara Islam Indonesia, NII), the country's first jihadist organization. JI sided with al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra in the Syrian crisis as a result of its historical ties to the organization. Since then, JI has maintained its ideological opposition to IS on the grounds that the caliphate is, in accordance with Islamic law, at best an overreach and, at worst, defective. JI rejects as unjustified and ineffective IS's widespread practice of takfir (apostatizing its Muslim rivals and foes). JI has demonstrated interest in traditional Islamist political problems during the past few years, although it seems to concentrate more on offering social services. Thus, the organization is a persistent worry rather than being an immediate threat. On 28 June 2019,

JI's relatively unknown leader, Para Wijayanto, was arrested after being on the run since 2003.

Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (Mujahidin Council of Indonesia, MMI). MMI is an overt organization that campaigns for the establishment of strict Islamic rule in Indonesia. It was founded by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir in 2000. Currently headed by Afghan veteran Abu Jibril, who is also in charge of one of Indonesia's most well-known extremist websites, Ar-Ramah.[12] *The Jamaah Anshorul Syariat* (Community of the Sharia Helpers; JAS). Members of JAS, led by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's sons, broke away from JAT in 2014 after rejecting Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's oath of commitment to IS. It is a rather minor outfit that is affiliated with Al-Qaeda in Syria.

The Indonesian state and the country's political stability are not seriously threatened by terrorism, despite the high likelihood of additional attacks. However, it does possess the ability to upset the political order and local community cohesion, escalating political division, and fueling religious tensions attack plans are still occasionally made, with the Indonesian national police being the target of most of them. Knives or low-grade improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are frequently used in attacks, which indicates minimal technical proficiency and restricted access to weaponry. Attack strategies have gradually changed from using high-impact weapons in the early 2000s to low-impact weapons in the last four to five years.[13] Consequently, since the Bali bombings of 2002, when it peaked, the number of terrorism victims has drastically decreased.[14]

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[12] Security Council Report s/res/2242/2015). Retrieved on the 22 February 2020 from: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFC F9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3- CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf

[13] Choo, K. R., *Organised Crime Groups in Cyber Space: A Typology* (Geneva: Springer, 2008).

[14] Gunaratna, R., 'Global Threat Assessment: A New Threat on The Horizon?', Counter Terrorist Trend and Analysis', *A Journal of International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research*, 7.1 (2015), 5.

Despite having less capability, IS in Indonesia has a disjointed cell structure, making it more challenging for security agencies to identify and disrupt. Following the attack on Chief Security Minister Wiranto, Indonesian authorities identified this detection issue as a challenge. The senior official's assassination appears to have been carried out opportunistically by a couple who are not directly associated with the more extensive JAD network.

Despite having fewer resources, IS in Indonesia has a fragmented cell structure that makes it harder for security organizations to locate and dismantle. Indonesian authorities identified this detection problem as a challenge after the attack on Wiranto, the Coordinating Minister for Political, Law, and Security in 2019. The killing of the senior official appears to have been committed opportunistically by a couple unconnected to the larger JAD network. The threat from highly online militant actors could soon increase due to improvements in the caliber and methodology of attack teaching materials.

Finally, an unofficial IS message from Indonesia on Telegram shows an increasing interest in Western and international targets. A widely shared Telegram message urged users to launch more ambitious attacks: "Choose broader targets, not only the police stations, the helpers of the oppressors. However, set international goals. The same way that our brothers in Jordan preyed on crusader visitors. It may be more likely than it was in recent years for attacks against foreign targets to occur in Indonesia. However, it is still too early to predict a change to the "far enemy," despite what one reliable analyst has said.

IS is concentrating its efforts in the Middle East on reestablishing networks and solidifying the power of its new head, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi alQurashi. While Iraq and Syria are the main targets of IS's efforts, there are signs that it wants to strengthen its position by turning its attention to foreign foes. In a recorded statement, IS spokesman Abu Hamza al-Quraishi called for a "new phase" of assaults against Israel on January 27, 2020. "War the Jews and regaining what they have taken from the Muslims, and this can be reclaimed only by fighting," should be the main goal of this new era.[15] The previous leader Abu Bakar al-audio Baghdadi's statement is the first one to be released since his passing. It was translated and widely disseminated on IS chat rooms in Indonesia, and Extremist websites also covered the speech.

Link with Al-Qaida

Academics have reached contradictory conclusions regarding JI's level of ties to the Al Qaeda network. The International Crisis Group (ICG) thinks that JI adheres to the jihadist ideology of Al Qaeda and that the group has extensive mutual experience in Afghanistan. While it makes claims about wanting to create a Southeast Asian caliphate, it disputes the idea that JI is merely acting as an Al Qaeda operative because "virtually all of its decision-making and much of its fund-raising has been conducted locally" and "its focus, for all the claims about wanting to create an Islamic state in Indonesia, continues to be on doing so".[16] The relationship between JI and bin Laden's group, according to the authors, is one of mutual benefit and reciprocal aid and is comparable to that of an NGO and the funding source. JI submits ideas to the donor as an impartial agent, and when the proposal is approved, JI is awarded a grant. In this instance, Al Qaeda finances initiatives that support its objectives but does not command or manage JI.

Contrarily, Abuza (2001) refers to Al Qaeda as the JI's "parent organization" because it was it that raised and developed JI members to become its support staff in Southeast Asian operations against Western targets. JI established its own capabilities as Al Qaeda's regional affiliate in Southeast Asia. In the late 1990s, Hambali and Jibril raised money and assembled the Laskar Mujahideen and the Laskar Jundullah to fight in

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[15] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, 'Islam and Violence in Malaysia', in *White Paper* (Singapore: RSIS, 2007).

[16] Gunaratna, R., and Ali, M., *Terrorist Rehabilitation: A New Frontier In Counter-terrorism* (London: Imperial College Press, 2014).

Ambon and Poso. Al-Faruq has acknowledged working closely with Ba'asyir to plot Al-Qaeda attacks by providing logistical support and the services of JI operatives; Ba'asyir disputes this link.

It is challenging to separate the precise roles played by JI and Al Qaeda members due to the intricate web of ties between them. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the architect of the 9/11 attacks, contributed 150,000 USD to the Bali operation prior to its start. At the same time, Hambali gave JI commander Mukhlas control over the mission's planning and implementation. According to this version,[17] JI appears to have carried out the operation while Al Qaeda provided the funds. However, because Hambali and Mukhlas have connections to Al Qaeda, the distinctions between the two operations continue to be hazy. Al Qaeda was also the driving force behind JI's plans to attack American sites in Singapore. It depended on JI cell members to conduct video reconnaissance, target monitoring, and the acquisition of explosives. Members of the Singaporean cell attested to the JI network's extensive resources by using the skills of other cells to do tasks that they were unable to complete on their own. These allegations may indicate a close affiliation between JI and Al Qaeda or demonstrate JI's adaptability in carrying out significant strikes outside of Indonesia[18].

Whatever the circumstances, it is evident that JI leaders use a variety of networks and groups throughout Indonesia to use strategically positioned people in order to carry out *jihad* in line with Abdullah Sungkar's teachings. JI has a significant influence through adherents of Darul Islam, former students of Pandok Pondok Pesantren Ngruki, its Malaysian equivalent, and School of Luqmanul Hakiem.

Implication of Security

According to Lindsay Heger et al., attacks made by hierarchical groupings would be more deadly than those made by non-hierarchical ones. The authors contend that organizational structure affects the type of violence, even though it does not imply that non-hierarchical groups cannot launch damaging attacks. This condition suggests that JI assaults may be more deadly than those carried out by terrorist organizations without hierarchies in the nation. The same three elements that explain why JI's strong agenda-setting abilities, accountability, and specialization are resilient can also be used to explain the deadly potential of such an attack. In contrast, non-hierarchical groups and pro-IS cells lack these components altogether.[19] Organizations like JI can successfully execute orders thanks to hierarchy because staff members are typically obeying rules with discipline, and where responsibility is established through reward and punishment systems. In addition, JI divisions and units can perform their specialized jobs more successfully than non-specialized, non-hierarchical units, including launching attacks, because of their high level of specialization. The inference is that when people responsible are experts in essential tasks, brute force attacks ought to be more deadly.

Indonesia has not yet experienced a lethal assault on the same scale as the Bali JI Bombings in 2002 and 2005. The closest was a family bombing of three churches in Surabaya, East Java, in May 2018. This attack, which was carried out by a pro-IS spinoff of Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD) in East Java, left 18 people dead, including the six bombers. The JAD, which was founded in late 2014, has developed a hierarchical structure, albeit it has struggled to function since its initial strike in January 2016. Despite failures with a string of arrests in recent years, the post-Para JI leadership may want to keep Ji's hierarchical and centralized structure for the group's governance if it continues to dedicate to PUPJI's guidelines

[17] Ahmad Yani (Former JI Operatives in Malaysia) *Interview* {February 2008}.

[18] M.M Aslam, & Gunaratna, R., *Terrorists Rehabilitation and Community Engagement in Malaysia and Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2019).

[19] A (Densus 88 officer in Bali Indonesia), *Interview* {11th May 2023}.

against random acts of violence as a long-term plan of action. This long-term plan aims to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia by first establishing the necessary infrastructure for jihad.[20]

Even if it might take the group years to choose a new *amir* after Para's arrest and rebuild the JI organizational structure, the JI hierarchy's vestiges can still be dangerous today. Although the police have identified the Banten and Fahim factions of JI as plotting attacks since last year, it is important to keep in mind that previous assaults connected to JI have proved lethal, even when they were carried out by factions or splinter cells, as seen in the 2003 Jakarta J.W. Marriott bombing case. This case also occurred in several bombing cases such as at the Ritz Carlton, the J.W. Marriott, the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in 2004, Bali in 2005, and the J.W. The Marriott in Jakarta in 2009.

The fact that established organizations can nevertheless continue to look to small independent groups for leadership has security implications as well. This fact implies that pro-IS cells may seek out JI returnees with military experience from Syria, those trained in sasana for training, or that JI ideologues' lectures may act as a doorway to jihadism.

Counterintelligence Strategy

Accountability

Accountability in the hierarchy is demonstrated when agents get precise instructions from their principals. Since 2016, Para has been in charge of the heads of sections and units, with assistance from the treasurer, the JI secretary, and the deputy. He meets with them face-to-face on a regular basis, individually or in pairs. There are also now additional accountability tiers in place. Each head of division may create small divisions or hire personnel to perform specific tasks, such as *idaroh* (administration), which keeps track of the membership status of JI *tholiah* (advanced forces) or multi-task troops to obtain a location

for JI activities, and coordinates with the ALWI Division (Security and Intelligence) for the security of *taqwiyah* (human resources), which enhances the caliber of personnel in terms of ideology, mental health, and physical wellbeing, *khidmah* (service) is to offer services to members in terms of marriage, childbirth, and misfortune; *tamwil* (treasury) is to collect monthly *infaq* (financial contributions) from members. *Iqtishod* (economics) is to provide entrepreneurship training for members so that members can generate more financial contributions to JI. If necessary, each section head may additionally include additional subsections.[21]

During Para's leadership, JI was able to carry out its objective without much interruption thank to its clearly defined structure and level of accountability. Centralized JI enforcement that can identify and punish disloyal, ineffective members who engage in careless or negligent behavior also helps reduce organizational losses. JI established the Hisbah enforcement division, whose chief Abu Fatih reported directly to Para.[22] For instance, the JI leadership discussed "punishment" for Jamal, a top JI employee in the Education Division, in May 2019 after Jamal defied orders to meet with Para. The JI central leadership had considered dismissing Jamal if he did not repent in accordance with sharia law after being given the first warning because they were concerned that his disobedience would cause division. Responsibility is not only through a penal system but also a system of rewards. JI has given employees promotions as compensation for sticking to their action plan.

Specialization

In addition to preventing violence, hierarchy enables specialisation within organisations and the productive production of many different types of commodities and services, such as conducting

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[20] Avishag.

[21] B (Special Branch officer from Perlis at Kangar), *Interview* {11 July 2023}.

[22] Ahmed Zahid Hamidi, 'Malaysia's Policy on Counter Terrorism and Deradicalisation Strategy,' *Journal of Public Security and Safety*, 2.1 (2016), 1-19.

political campaigns and offering social services. Specific abilities can be identified and developed by the group, which could improve organisational capacity and effectiveness. The core of preaching and jihad (military), or tamkin siyasi and tamkin askari, respectively, have been represented in JI's speciality. The JI division or unit that implements *tamkin siyasi* consists of the da'wah and education divisions, as well as the units in charge of the *iqtishād*, ad hoc projects, and *naqib* (leadership) programs (economics or entrepreneurship training). The ALWI and Logistics section is in charge of putting takin askari into practice. When talent is found early in the recruitment process, the practice of specialization in JI is improved.

To meet the requirements of the various JI divisions, newly hired cadres are urged to further their studies or develop their talents. For instance, members of the JI Propaganda Division are transferred to Yemen or Sudan to pursue their studies in psychology or Islamic studies. Staff members of the Education division have received funding to attend various *Ma'hads* (Islamic schools). Staff members of the logistics division are also awarded scholarships to further their legal education. ALWI encourages students to continue their education in languages and IT to develop their hacking talents (for ALWIs members of the International Relations sub-section). The military component of JI is its most risky specialty, as evidenced by the deployment of certain cadres to Syria, to develop both its military wing and future leaders.

These cadres must pass the most rigorous admissions requirements to join JI. They not only pass the difficult physical, health, and intellectual written tests on Islamic studies and interviews,[23] but they are also among the best graduates of several JI-related pesantren. The cadre's immediate assignment is to work in the *sasana* unit as trainers for the following batch, who will be dispatched to Syria after a six-month training period. The *sasana* program, which was

established in 2012, was subsequently abandoned when numerous JI cadres were apprehended and deported from Turkey in 2018 after making several unsuccessful efforts to enter Syria.

Policy Recommendations

Indonesia must find a way to compromise between its religious politics and American requests for stronger anti-terrorism cooperation. The administration of former President Megawati was hesitant to label JI a terrorist group domestically because it was concerned about alienating Muslim votes before the 2004 presidential elections. Given that Vice President Haz, leader of the Muslim-friendly United Development Party (PPP), denied the existence of terrorists and terrorism in Indonesia prior to the Bali bombings and was a staunch supporter of Ja'far Umar Thalib, the founder of Laskar Jihad, the public is reluctant to acknowledge that terrorists have committed acts in the name of Islam. If the government does not engage secular forces and moderate Muslim leaders to seize the initiative, Islamic fundamentalism could continue to gain ground in Indonesia.

Understanding the JI phenomena as an intellectual war with moderate forces for Muslim hearts and minds is a prerequisite for developing an effective plan to counteract political Islam's influence in these communities. For the successful war on terror, public diplomacy is essential. One of the most crucial weapons in the American arsenal against terrorism is soft power, which should be applied more frequently within the regional ASEAN framework. Al Qaeda, JI, and other organizations they support are supported through charities, NGOs, mosques, websites, banks, and other financial institutions. Southeast Asian governments must impose strict security and financial restrictions, notwithstanding the political difficulty.

Congress must make sure Southeast Asian law enforcement organizations transform into a police force specializing in counter-terrorism methods to increase the efficacy of American counter-terrorism activities abroad. To convince

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[23] C (Malaysian Police from e8 Counter Terrorism Unit at Kuala Lumpur), *Interview* {7th July 2022}.

the skeptics in the public that such actions were justified in convicting terrorists, a reinforced legal system should be used in conjunction with them. The judiciary will need to be reformed and trained to reduce corruption. Additionally, the control of the treasury, customs, and immigration officers will need to be improved. The CRS study on terrorism in Southeast Asia states that "in a region where multinational institutions and collaboration are weak, countering terrorist operations will need a coordinated, international response." Enhancing international intelligence exchange, border security, and extradition agreements will make it more difficult for JI to operate across borders, share resources, and take advantage of tensions created by competing interests. Across Southeast Asia, national jurisdiction. The Bush administration should take into account the following possibilities if it wants to be successful in its fight against JI's regional network: (1) Examine the role of women and families in the JI network; (2) Engage in an aggressive public relations campaign to enhance the perception of the United States in Southeast Asia and the Middle East; (3) Support the adoption of stricter financial controls; (4) Strengthen regional security structures while also encouraging the development of judicial and democratic institutions in the region; (5) These measures will support and strengthen American efforts to battle the JI regional network.

Military Convergence and Polarization

Despite the pervasive threat of terrorism, Indonesia is nevertheless a stable, mainly peaceful democracy and rightfully viewed as a success story, especially compared to other countries in the region. However, the presidential election on April 2019 results showed that the nation is divided along nationalist-Islamist lines. Majorities of non-Muslims, members of minorities, and supporters of pluralism supported Jokowi, the incumbent president. Meanwhile, Prabowo, a populist politician, received a resounding victory with conservative Muslims and Islamists. Both

sides' partisans frequently viewed the other as an "existential danger".[24]

There was a convergence in the militant internet ecosystem when riots erupted in May 2019 following the election, driven by Islamists who supported Prabowo and contested Jokowi's victory. The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and other groups with conservative Islamist and pro-ISIS militants found common ground on Telegram for the first time. The term "*toghut*," which refers to an oppressive, non-Islamic administration, was first used by terrorists to describe the Indonesian government by conservatives. Although they disagreed on the means, the two different terrorist groups agreed that Islamic law was necessary. The FPI and others were betrayed, according to militants who support ISIS, much as the Islamist in Algeria in 1992 were prevented from winning elections following a military coup.

Jokowi has adopted a much tougher stance on Islamist since being re-elected. A "Joint Ministerial Decree" that his government published in November 2019 created a web page for employees to report one another for *"radikalisme."* The religious school curriculum is also being altered in the name of counter-radicalization under the direction of retired general and minister of religion Fachrul Razi. Now that the election is gone, polarization may be less evident, but the division still exists.

The biggest threat from terrorism in Indonesia is how it might exacerbate the division over Islam in the state, which already exists.[25] A terrorist assault that is significant enough to shock the political establishment and spark a widespread crackdown on nonviolent Islamist might encourage militant convergence and intensify polarization. Terrorist organizations might take advantage of the chance to recruit nonviolent conservatives who feel persecuted by the

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[24] Harun, 'Rising to the Challenge of Islamic Extremism in Malaysia' in Mazlan. A., Manaf. Z. A., Aslam, M.M., *Extremism and Radicalism in Malaysia: A Selected Work* (Putrajaya: Penerbit Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia, 2017).
[25] Harun.

government. The quality of Indonesian democracy would suffer in this situation. A populist Islamist candidate running against the present quo would also face the risk of bringing in a strict religious regime that oppresses nationalists and secularists. Even though the possibility seems unlikely, the recent history of the Arab Spring should serve as a lesson in prudence.

The Future of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)

Despite being supplanted by IS in recent years, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) remains Indonesia's biggest and most dangerous organization or an extremist group. The organization has kept a low profile while rejecting IS's call for domestic violence and opting for a stealthy consolidation strategy. As it does, a more recent generation of JI activists has increased their social media activity and involvement in domestic political concerns. Jemaah Islamiyah thus poses a problem for counter-terrorism strategy because it is difficult to justify allocating resources to tracking the group when IS is the main concern. However, Jemaah Islamiyah history shows us that the organization might turn to violent methods in the future as a result of a change in ideology, or it might give rise to a splinter group that is more eager to carry out assaults.[26]

Both Jemaah Islamiyah and IS concur that Indonesia needs to adopt Islamic law as part of an Islamic state. However, JI thinks that for now, enforcing Islamic law should bconducted by proselytizing and without a combative mode.[27] Although JI backs violent jihad in Syria and other hotspots where its comrades in al-Qaeda are at war, it is becoming more active in domestic political activities at home. Mass Islamist demonstrations in Jakarta, known as the "212 movement," which aim to pressure the government over issues of Islamic law like

blasphemy, have been promoted by pro-JI media outlets, including Arramah.com. Jihadists who support IS, in contrast, disapproved of the 212 demonstrations because they reflected democratic participation that is not Islamic.[28]

Despite the fact IS is the extremist violent threat in Indonesia, basically JI's more strategic "long game" may have the margin impact. JI's expanding obligation with national political matters allows it to cooperate with Indonesian mainstream Islamist to increase recruitment opportunities. This is especially true now that President Joko Widodo's administration has adopted a more oppressive stance on traditionalist Islamists. JI might try to take advantage of the chance to grow bigger and stronger in a political environment where supporters are split between Islamists and nationalists.

Conclusion

Several conclusions and policy implications arise from the confluence of internal and external factors that led to JI's most recent shift.

First, JI is an incredibly dynamic organization that grew as a splinter group from another separatist organization. JI is an established edits headquarters nationwide and developed a substantial recruitment base. It also recognized and took advantage of the opportunity to return to Indonesia to set up operations. Further, JI drew from conducting operations because its leaders acknowledged that external effects were JI taking their toll on its internal integrity.

The research for this study supports Cronin's notion that effective counter-terrorism strategies will exploit the terrorist group's weaknesses. The internal rift within JI that the Indonesian government and other external factors exploited initiated JI's current shift.

Second, although improved counter terrorism strategies significantly weakened JI's

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[26] M.M., Aslam, 'Threat of Daesh in Universities: Malaysia's Experience', *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 9.4 (2017), 12-16.

[27] Brian A. Jackson, John C. Baker, Cragin, K., Parachini, J., Horacio R. Trujilo, Chalk, P., *Aptitude For Destruction* (RAND Infrastructure, Safety, and Environment, United States of America, 2005).

[28] M.M., Aslam, Othman. I.B., dan Rosli, N.K., 'De-Radicalization Programs in South-East Asia: A Comparative Study of Rehabilitation Programs In Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia And Singapore', *Journal of Education and Social Sciences,* 4. 2 (2016), 154-160.

operational capacity, they do not exclusively account for JI's most recent shift. Several other external factors, namely its disassociation from other Indonesian radical Islamist groups, alienation of the Indonesian people, and changing relationship with the United States, also affected this trend. JI poses a complex problem to the Indonesian government because as long as it does not openly engage in violence or conduct attacks, it remains a legal organization that can continue to operate. Although Indonesian governance has improved in the past decade, corruption remains a significant problem. In 2008, Indonesia ranked 126th in the world in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. With a score of 2.6 out of 10, it scored lower than Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam. This was higher than its 2.3 in 2007, but the Indonesian government has a long way to go. In a 2009 poll, 51 percent of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the performance of the national legislature, while 34 percent responded positively. The Indonesian government must continue to improve its governance and address corruption issues.[29]

Third, despite JI's loss in popularity among other Islamist groups, disaffected Muslim factions willing to revert to violence to achieve their objectives still exist in Indonesia.[30] Although other radical Islamists missions are not necessarily consistent with JI's, the potential for recruitment among these groups increases the longer they remain disaffected. Since JI's focus has now shifted back to Indonesia, more of a counter insurgency approach must be adopted to pull these disaffected groups away from JI. Possible methods include increasing strategic communications, reaching out through the media and the Internet focusing on rehabilitation and deradicalization programs in prisons, and engaging Salafis through imams who preach about how conducting offensive jihadis contrary to

Islamic values and counterproductive to their objectives.

Fourth, JI's political and social transition is not entirely out of the question. Ba'asyir's establishment and involvement in MMI and JAT, as well as increasing connections with legitimate political parties, indicates this could be a possibility. Political participation was considered as a potential for JI and comparing it to terrorist organizations that have followed similar paths, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah, this article demonstrated that political participation would be possible. This projection is not meant to imply that JI will more likely follow this path than any others that were considered. Instead, it is merely to demonstrate the possibility of a political transition, which is an option that has not yet been sufficiently considered.

Finally, the U.S.–Indonesian relationship is important in determining the success or failure of radical Islamist groups in Indonesia. The perception of the United States has improved since President Obama took office, but this is not enough. As polls show, Indonesian sentiment toward the United States has been historically unstable.

Indonesians feel the United States has a narrow and limited interest in Indonesia, distrusting American intentions and their support stability. Continued engagement and participation are necessary.[31]

The relevant question for U.S. policy makers is whether JI's survival and potential regeneration still threaten the United States or would the scope of the problem be limited to within Indonesia? The radicalization and expansion of JI's aims in 2000 to encompass the entire region because of Al Qaeda's influence and the experience of its members fighting alongside the mujahidin in Afghanistan demonstrate that although its focus is back on Indonesia, this is subject to change. The most effective and lasting solution for the United States is to allow Indonesians and the Indonesian government to continue to address the threat of violent extremism in Indonesia because that will

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[29] M.M., Aslam, *The Role of CSO: Malaysia's experience. Asia-Europe, Counter Terrorism Dialogue on 15-17th of September 2019* (Kuala Lumpur: The Continental Hotel, 2019b)

[30] Nasir Abbas (Former JI), *Interview* {15th July 2021}.

[31] Hamli (Former BNPT Jakarta), *Interview* {11th of April 2022}.

give them the sense of ownership and responsibility to ensure success. However, the United States should continue providing financial and training support for Indonesiancounter-terrorism operations.

Although some people argue that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) constructs of unanimity and noninterference in internal affairs have been counterproductive to meaningful counter-terrorism collaboration, the regional and bilateral partnerships that Indonesia has developed with countries in the region have had large payoffs. The increased intelligence and information sharing with Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines has allowed for a better overall understanding of Asian Islamist groups' organizations and structures and a more remarkable ability to keep track of suspected terrorists. Further, Indonesia's strong security relationship with Australia has disrupted communication between Islamic extremists in the two states and has contributed to the security against future terrorist attacks. These regional security partnerships must continue to be a priority to ensure timely and accurate tracking of potential revivals of violence across the region.

The most effective strategy the United States can adopt on an international level is to successfully curb the terrorists' capacities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. History has shown that extremists in the Middle East and South Asia have profoundly affected JI's path. While ties between JI and Al Qaeda are believed to no longer exist, persistence and resolution in U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan would prevent the seties from re-forming.

Addressing JI's new structure as an ideological and political/social organization is tremendously sensitive within Indonesia. On the one hand, cracking down ,unthinkingly and severely on an organization that provides public services and is not directly linked to any violence will risk a resurgence of extremism, as seen in the proliferation of extremist groups after Suharto's resignation in 1998. On the other hand, making light of JI's continued existence, or worse, failing

to acknowledge its threat, could be even more dangerous. This also happened before, when the Indonesian government did not acknowledge that JI was a terrorist threat in the early 2000s and, thus, refused to act against a terrorist group of growing influence in Indonesia. Some argue that this is happening again since the Indonesian government has not banned JI as a terrorist organization. In 2008, the Indonesian Vice President denied JI's existence: "How can we ban an organization that does not exist? Who is the chairman? Who are the members? Where is the headquarters?" Just because there is no clear leader and there has been a decline in attacks, it does not mean that the organization no longer exists.

This study has demonstrated the impact of external effects on JI's internal problems and the resulting decline of JI's operational capacity and shift toward its ideological focus. Also, despite the decline in operational capacity, JI remains a prominent organization because of its informal networks through its publishing industry, schools, and family ties. Although JI's transition to a legitimate political and social organization is possible, the actions the Indonesian government chooses to take or not take will profoundly affect JI's future.

Jemaah Islamiyah is a dynamic organization that has taken many shapes to adapt to its environment and ensure its survival. Although external factors have successfully suppressed operational capacity and exploited internal divisions, JI has successfully arisen out of the ashes in the past and is capable of doing so again.

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