



Asian Conflicts Reports

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The new face of the Jemaah Islamiyah

Nelson Rand



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July's bombings in Jakarta show the Jemaah Islamiyah has been re-energized

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Indonesia has had success in countering JI, but key leaders are still at large

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Despite the absence of chain of command, JI cells remain active and lethal

On the morning of July 17, 2009, twin suicide attacks were launched almost simultaneously on the JW Marriott and Ritz Carlton in Jakarta, Indonesia. Nine people were killed, including the two bombers, and over 50 were injured, many of them foreign nationals. Among the injured were eight Americans.

The double bombing broke a four-year lull in terrorist attacks in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, and reveals the new face of Jemaah Islamiyah [JI], Southeast Asia's largest terrorist network. Just a day before the attack, an Australian think-tank warned of a possible resurgence of attacks because of competition among extremist factions of JI seeking to establish dominance. The report, released by the Australian Strategic Policy Research Institute and entitled *Jemaah Islamiyah: A renewed struggle?* argues that two recent developments—current leadership tensions and the release of several former JI members from prison—“at least raise the possibility that splinter factions might now seek to re-energize the movement through violent attacks.” The authors were right.

One of these splinter factions is led by Noordin Mohammed Top, a Malaysian born accountant-turned-Islamic extremist. Nicknamed the “moneymen,” Top fled to Indonesia after the Malaysian government's crackdown on Islamic extremists following 9/11. Top is believed to be responsible for numerous attacks in Indonesia, including the 2002 Bali bombings which killed 202 people and injured more than 200, the bombing of the JW Marriott in Jakarta in 2003, the bombing of the Australian embassy in Jakarta in 2004 and the Bali bombings of 2005. In April 2006, he narrowly escaped arrest when Indonesian police raided his safe-house.

“Noordin Top is a very intelligent person, not because of his being an accountant, but from his experiences as well as his knowledge of the Islamic faith and the expertise that he has derived over the years working closely with JI members,” says Andrin Raj, a counterterrorism expert and director of Malaysia's Stratad Asia Pacific Strategic Center.

“From my research and understanding of Noordin Top, he is likely to continue his endeavors for jihad and will die as a jihadist.”

Prior to the attacks on July 17, 2009, the Bali bombings of 2005 were the last terrorist attacks to be launched in Indonesia. The threat posed by JI had receded, mainly due to the success of Indonesian counter-terrorism efforts. Dozens of JI members have been arrested or killed, including several key leaders, and authorities have managed to thwart several attacks, such as the bombing of a café frequented by Western tourists in West Sumatra in 2008. Furthermore, authorities have been able to decimate the international linkages that gave JI members access to funds and training. JI took a further blow in April 2009 with the arrest of Mas Selamat Kastari, the group's Singapore cell leader. Kastari was arrested in Malaysia with the help of Singaporean and Indonesian intelligence.

Curbing Islamic extremism and terrorism in Indonesia was one of the bigger achievements of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who took office in 2004 and was re-elected in a landslide vote on 8 July 2009. Successful policies have included improving law enforcement and addressing terrorist threats through more police work than through military means, establishing village-level intelligence networks, rehabilitating and reintegrating former militants into society, and allowing opportunities for Islamists to participate in above-ground organizations. Such policies have been coupled with strong counter-terrorism assistance from the United States and Australia, which has ranged from providing human rights training to setting up, funding, equipping and training the elite Detachment 88 counter-terrorism taskforce.

Such policies however have not come without criticism. Human rights groups say the country's anti-terror legislation and decrees curb fundamental human rights, while Yudhoyono has been repeatedly criticized for over accommodating hardliners and allowing them to influence government policy. But overall, Yudhoyono has been given high marks for his government's efforts in curbing terrorism in Indonesia.

“[Yudhoyono] has done exceptionally well in terms of arresting JI members and making them talk,” says Noor Huda Ismail, executive director of Indonesia's International Institute for Peacebuilding and co-author of *Jemaah Islamiyah: A renewed struggle?*

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Despite Indonesia's success in countering terrorism over the past several years—and regional success as well—key JI leaders remain at large, including the group's military commander, Zulkarnaen, an electronics and bomb-making specialist, Dulmatin, recruitment expert Umar Patek, and Noordin Top. Analysts say Top drifted away from the mainstream JI group due to a disagreement on hitting “soft targets,” such as hotels and nightclubs, which target civilians. In 2006, he founded the group Tanzim Qaedat al-Jihad, which translates as the ‘Organization for the Base of Jihad’—also referred to as al-Qaeda for the Malay Archipelago. It is recognized as the most radical and violent of the JI splinter groups and advocates the mass killing of westerners.

Not surprisingly, all fingers point to this group for orchestrating the latest attacks in Jakarta. Police say the bombs used were the same explosive devices discovered at an Islamic boarding school in central Java during a raid a few days before that was apparently part of an ongoing search for Top. The explosives were also the same type used in the 2002 Bali bombings. Furthermore, the operational method such as the use of suicide bombers also bears the hallmark of Top's group. It also appears that western businessmen were the intended target of the attack—at least for the attack on the JW Marriot. Closed-circuit television footage from the hotel shows the suicide bomber, wearing a baseball cap, carrying a backpack on his chest and wheeling a suitcase, walking purposefully toward the lounge where 18 business executives and an Australian trade commissioner were having a breakfast meeting. He blew himself up at the entrance. About two minutes later, another suicide attacker detonated himself at the restaurant of the nearby Ritz Carlton.

These latest attacks in Jakarta reveal the new face of JI. Southeast Asia's largest terrorist network is no longer the cohesive organization it was prior to the Bali bombings of 2002, which thrust the little-known movement onto the world's terror stage. The group was officially formed nine years before in 1993, although its roots can be traced back to the 1940s with the formation of Darul Islam [“House of Islam”], a radical movement that sought to make Indonesia an Islamic republic. JI was founded with the aim to establish an Islamic caliphate incorporating Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines. A military-like structure was set up encompassing four regions, or *mantiqi*, across Southeast Asia: *Mantiqi 1* for Southern Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, *Mantiqi 2* for most of Indonesia except for Sulawesi, *Mantiqi 3* for the Southern Philippines, Sabah and Sulawesi and *Mantiqi 4* for West Papua and Australia.

Ji's first major attack was a series of coordinated bomb attacks across Indonesia on Christmas Eve 2000, which killed 19 people and injured about 120. However, the group remained pretty much off the international terrorist radar screen until the Bali bombings in October 2002. Subsequent security operations by Indonesian authorities severely damaged the leadership structure of the organization. Many analysts believe the crackdown after the 2002 Bali bombings has left the group without a formal chain of command. Noordin Top, for example, apparently still views himself as a JI member but he answers to no one.

Today, the mainstream JI faction no longer supports indiscriminate attacks—at least for the time being. Led by Abu Rusdan, an Indonesian religious teacher, these “traditionalists” reject the tactics of the hardliners like Top, believing that the disadvantages far outweigh the benefits. Such attacks, they argue, generate public outrage, are expensive, and result in inevitable crackdowns on their organization. Rejecting such tactics, however, does not make this faction any less radical; rather it is a strategic decision that could change with the onset of different circumstances. And while these traditionalists may reject the tactics of the hardliners, they are still allies and willingly provide sanctuary for them. This helps explain Top's ability to elude arrest for so long. “Although internal friction is apparent among JI members, this does not mean they will call the police and report the whereabouts of Top,” says Noor Huda Ismail. “Such individuals would be happy to provide sanctuary for Top and have even arranged for his nuptials with women who believe that marrying Top will increase their social status because he is considered a *mujahid*, a warrior of Islam.”

Other JI factional groups include Jamaah Anshorut Tauhid [JAT] and Jamaah Tauhid wal Jihad. The former was set up last year by JI's alleged spiritual leader Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who preaches extreme hatred to the US and its allies, while the latter is a study group led by Aman Abdurrahman, a young teacher.

While JI may be fractured and without a formal chain of command, the Jakarta bombings show that factions and cells have the capability and willingness to act on their own. JI's threat in Indonesia—as well as the rest of the region—is still ever present. “The Jakarta bombing is a means to show that JI is indeed active and capable of carrying out strategic attacks within the region,” say Raj from Malaysia's Stratad Asia Pacific Strategic Centre. “We must be vigilant within our shores as ‘homegrown and sleeping cells’ still exist and are more bold than ever.” •

Maritime security in East Asia

Shafiah Fifi Muhibat



Maritime issues are the main concern of East Asian security. The islands and peninsulas of East Asia frame key arteries of communication and commerce, as a result, the sea dominates the economic and political affairs of the region. In the pre-modern period, old empires were established based upon sea power. During the colonial period, European warships were the predominant force in the area. In the present era, more than half of the world's trade passes through East Asian waters. International trade depends on its security.

Today, the growing prominence of maritime issues in East Asia is strengthened by the fact that many current and emerging regional security concerns are fundamentally maritime and transnational. These include serious security threats such as piracy, armed robbery, maritime terrorism, offshore resources disputes, illegal fishing, trafficking of persons, smuggling of arms, and other illegal activities at sea. In this regard, the sea is also the source of a variety of dangers that not only threaten the prosperity of the users, but may directly cause security threats to states.

Regional states increasingly take rising concern over maritime security issues into account. These concerns are reflected in the significant maritime dimension of the current arms acquisition programs in the region—for example, anti-ship missiles, naval electronic warfare systems, maritime surveillance and intelligence collection systems, submarines, mine warfare capabilities, and aircraft with maritime attack capabilities. Unfortunately, these new offensive capabilities tend to be favored by the regional states over efforts to enhance cooperation between states to secure the sea areas.

Maritime security is a regional issue in East Asia, but the impact reaches far beyond the region. East Asia is home to important sea-lanes and straits. Some of the world's busiest ports are located in the area, or rely on maritime traffic through the region's sea areas. Many other vessels, including fishing boats and passenger vessels pass through and overwhelm the regional waters.

As maritime security is a regional concern, only the regional community as a whole can effectively act to enhance it. Indeed, regionalism in maritime affairs has developed where groups of countries have perceived that their physical geography, complementary exploitation of sea-based resources, and policies create unique challenges that distinguish them from other countries and give rise to needs and interests best satisfied by a regional approach. Such perception has long existed in East Asia. However, the extent of cooperative security among the regional states is still far from satisfactory.

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea [UNCLOS] entered into force in 1994. It is a comprehensive set of regulations that serves as the international law in maritime affairs and has been ratified by a majority of states internationally. However, this complex and far-reaching convention has limitations. One problem that has existed since UNCLOS was established is the basic conflict of interest between coastal states that wish to extend their jurisdiction over maritime space, and maritime or user states that seek to maintain maximum freedom of navigation—a clash of interest with vital implications for regional security.

There is also concern about the applicability of UNCLOS to the current environment. UNCLOS, being a general convention, has built-in vagueness and grey areas when it comes to applying its principles to specific region. The governance of international maritime affairs is a dynamic phenomenon, with new trends and changes constantly emerging in response to rapid global development. In this regard, while the UNCLOS remains static, its interpretation will later over time.

Indeed, UNCLOS acknowledges the need for regional action. Article 122 specifically calls for regionalization of various functions. This means that the ratification and entry into force of UNCLOS shifts the venue for addressing issues of maritime law and policy from the global to the regional and bilateral levels. Article 122 of UNCLOS explicitly emphasizes the need for states bordering an enclosed or semi-enclosed sea to cooperate in the exercise of their rights and in the performance of their duties under UNCLOS. In maritime affairs, geographic location endows certain actors with a degree of eminence. In dealing with local particularities, however, global norms and rules meet some tough impediments. Local particularities should be respected, but particular mechanisms must also be established in general accordance with international law and norms.

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Maritime issues are East Asia's principal security concern

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Cooperative security arrangements in the region are far from satisfactory

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There is a strong case for multilateral maritime regime building in East Asia



There are also impediments to the implementation of cooperative strategies in ocean management. Most of the existing cooperative capability is only bilateral. Multilateral efforts have mostly been talk shops with little action or implementation. The main problem is that the current system of marine management and resource exploitation in the region is focused primarily on preserving national interests. Hence, concerns of state sovereignty and territorial claims are much more highly regarded than efforts to cooperate. Asian countries are generally not sufficiently aware of the seriousness of the need for a multilateral maritime regime in the region. As Mark J. Valencia argues, there is no strong constituency in the region for ocean management: when countries in Asia think maritime, they think first and foremost about boundary disputes rather than the protection of environment or management of resources. These perceptions must change.

The second problem that impedes cooperative strategies in East Asian maritime management is the general lack of funding and resources, particularly for capacity building and marine scientific research in the region. Regional cooperation in maritime affairs means addressing the limited scientific, managerial, and enforcement capabilities of individual states. The need for issue-specific, and geographically-specific, capacity-building regimes is apparent, especially the need to build technical competence to dealing with significant challenges. So far, there has been a failure to translate the cooperative rhetoric in international treaties, including UNCLOS, into a higher level of technical cooperation between developed and developing countries.

As East Asian states become more concerned about the costs and benefits to regime building, as opposed to maintaining the status quo, prospects of an acceptable and actually efficient regional maritime regime turns sour. There is a paradox in this situation, with regards to the provision of UNCLOS. UNCLOS empowers littoral states in the region to extend their maritime jurisdiction over resources and economic activities to as much as 200 miles offshore. As a result, there is no sea area left unclaimed, and many areas are actually in dispute due to overlapping national territorial claims. This clearly places the pursuit of national interests above regional cooperation. Ironically, while UNCLOS is cited to justify the jurisdiction extension the UNCLOS articles calling for cooperative security approaches are widely disregarded. In truth, however, the extension of national jurisdictions increases the need for multilateral cooperation.

UNCLOS expanded the opportunities and obligations of coastal states, but a new approach to international cooperation is needed to realize both. This new approach must tackle directly and equitably key concerns related to the consequences of cooperative security, in particular concerns related to the impacts on natural marine systems, human welfare and socio-economic effect.

Multilateralism preferable to the current unilateral and bilateral approaches. Multilateral mechanisms are essential for the management of the maritime environment and resources that are shared or claimed by multiple states. The need for improved multilateral consultations and coordination to meet the challenge of changes and development in maritime affairs is imperative. In general, governments are more likely to agree on priorities at the local level, where particular problems are discernible and directly affect national interests, than they are to accept the sweeping terms of international ocean conventions such as UNCLOS. The “pull” factor of global innovations and expertise, the global marketplace, and endorsement at the global level provide some leverage for harmonized and updated regional measures. Likewise, regional issues may have global implications, hence regional concerns have to go hand in hand with common global concerns.

There is some movement in that direction, although most is of a very gradual character. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which bring states in the Asia Pacific region together to discuss security issues, has endeavored to address regional maritime security issues. Within the ARF framework, states have held various meetings such as the ARF Workshop on Capacity Building of Maritime Security, and the ARF Maritime Security Shore Exercise Planning, which is a follow-up to the ARF Confidence Building Measures on “Regional Cooperation in Maritime Security”. The flexible nature of ARF, generally regarded as conducive for talks on this particular issue, is at the same time hampered by its lack of ability to enforce compliance.

The positive and negative aspects of East Asian maritime affairs argue strongly for an evolutionary process for multilateral maritime regime building in East Asia. To be effective, a regular overview of international maritime arrangement and related institutional support is needed at both regional and global levels. There is clearly a substantial foundation for regional maritime regime in East Asia. However, the extent to which such cooperative strategy will have real or lasting result is less evident. If East Asia is to implement a more comprehensive regional approach to maritime issues, a number of questions need to be faced. These include the economic disparity between states, the need for a regional maritime organization, and the varying degrees of enthusiasm for the establishment of multilateral regional responses to maritime issues. •

China's rise and terrorism risks

Paul J. Smith



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In recent years, China has endured multiple terrorist and criminal attacks overseas

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China's response to this violence has been multifaceted

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China's terrorism challenge could present an opportunity for great power collaboration

On 18 October 2008, members of a local militant group in Sudan abducted nine Chinese oil workers employed by the China National Petroleum Corporation [CNPC] in that country's South Kordofan State. Initial reports indicated that the kidnappers were demanding a share of the region's oil profits, although subsequent statements appeared to suggest that the militants were also motivated to kidnap the Chinese workers because "China supports the Khartoum government militarily and helps it marginalize our region."

During the next few days, what had begun as a kidnapping incident deteriorated into tragedy as an apparent rescue operation went awry. Of the nine original hostages, five were subsequently killed. In the end, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi noted that "it is one of the most serious...cases of [the killing of] overseas Chinese workers in recent years and we are very shocked by it." Later the Chinese Foreign Ministry expressed "strong indignation and condemnation for the inhumane terrorist deed" by kidnappers who had attacked the unarmed Chinese workers.

As shocking as the Sudan incident was, however, it was unfortunately not unique. In recent years, China has endured multiple cases of attacks and kidnappings in Africa, South Asia, Central Asia and elsewhere, some of which have led to significant loss of life. Some of these attacks derive from terrorism or local insurgencies, while in other cases they are rooted in anti-Chinese racial or criminal violence.

Whatever the cause, such attacks provide a sober reminder that rising powers in the international system sometimes must confront significant risks in terms of terrorism and political violence. Moreover, as China's global drive for energy security and natural resource acquisition expands in the years and decades ahead, such risks may increase substantially.

China's economic and political rise is widely viewed as one of the major geopolitical events of the early 21st century. As a recent U.S. intelligence report noted: "few countries are poised to have more impact on the world over the next 15-20 years than China. If current trends persist, by 2025 China will have the world's second largest economy and will be a leading military power." At the same time, however, China is learning—like many rising powers before it—that great power status (and the overseas presence that inevitably accompanies it) can sometimes evoke a violent backlash.

Nowhere is this trend more obvious than in Africa, where Chinese companies have launched ambitious energy or natural resource-related operations. Although generally welcome across the continent, Chinese corporations and individuals have sometimes encountered shocking levels of violence. More than a year prior to the Sudanese attack, militants associated with the Ogaden National Liberation Front [ONLF] operating in Ethiopia killed nine Chinese oil workers, although the ONLF later claimed on its website that Ethiopian soldiers, not Chinese workers, were the primary targets in the attack. Similar attacks against Chinese companies and individuals (including kidnappings) have occurred in Nigeria, Zambia and other countries.

In Pakistan, violence against Chinese engineers and other workers has strained what both governments have consistently described as their "all weather friendship." In July 2007, a bus full of Chinese engineers was bombed in the town of Hub (located in the restive province of Baluchistan), although there were no Chinese deaths. However, that same month, three Chinese workers were shot dead in the city of Peshawar. In February 2006, three Chinese engineers were shot (also in Hub), while in May 2004, three Chinese were killed in a car bombing attack in the coastal city of Gwadar.

Other parts of the world, too, have witnessed attacks against Chinese interests. In Afghanistan, 11 Chinese construction workers were killed in June 2004 near Kunduz. Similarly, in May 2009, anti-Chinese violence erupted between local workers and the Chinese staff at a mining facility located in Papua New Guinea, resulting in injuries to both PNG and Chinese nationals. Several days later, violence erupted in the PNG capital city of Port Moresby against Chinese-owned shops and businesses. In addition to anti-Chinese violence abroad, China has also confronted terrorist violence emanating from (or associated with) its restive Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, which hosts roughly eight million non-Han Uighurs and other minorities. Although most Uighurs do not engage in violence, fringe militant groups such as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement [ETIM] create a persistent security challenge for Beijing.

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In the months prior to (and during) the Olympic Games in 2008, Chinese authorities disrupted a number of plots, most of which were attributed to ETIM or aligned groups. In March 2008, alert crew members aboard a China Southern Airlines jet headed from Urumqi (Xinjiang) to Beijing prevented an apparent aviation suicide plot engineered by a 19-year-old female ethnic Uighur and at least one accomplice. The jet diverted from its planned course and safely landed in a nearby city. In April 2008, Chinese authorities reported that they had disrupted two terror cells intending to launch a suicide bombing and kidnapping campaign during the Olympic Games.

In other cases, the militants' plots succeeded, as in August 2008, when a series of attacks were launched in Xinjiang, including one in which militants attacked a division of police officers in Kashgar (Xinjiang), killing 16 of them and injuring 16 others. Six days later (10 August 2008), a group of 15 militants (including a 15 year-old girl) attacked a police station in Kuqa county (Xinjiang) by crashing an explosives-laden vehicle into it; two people were killed and five injured. This was followed by another attack in which three security officers were killed near Kashgar.

China's response to terrorism and criminal violence directed at its citizens—both within and outside China—has been multifaceted. In response to anti-Chinese violence in African and South Asian countries, for instance, Chinese companies have begun reevaluating how they conduct business. In a recent review of its operations, China National Petroleum Corporation identified 18 countries in which it conducts business as “high risk” where the potential for militant attacks is significantly elevated. One measure being considered is to raise the number of local workers in its various projects, to as much as 90 percent of the workforce in certain vulnerable locations.

In addition, the Chinese government has urged host governments to provide better security and protection for Chinese investors or workers residing in those countries. In response to anti-Chinese violence last month in Papua New Guinea, the Chinese Government urged the PNG Government to increase “police presence to better protect Chinese enterprises and nationals.”

Similarly, in late May 2009, a Pakistani newspaper reported that Beijing had deployed a 22-member delegation to Islamabad to discuss Chinese worker safety in Pakistan. Pakistan's Interior Ministry assured the Chinese that it had taken “special measures” to ensure the security of Chinese nationals working in the country, to include the creation of “special squads” that would provide constant security for certain groups.

The security issue has become particularly sensitive in Sino-Pakistan relations. In 2008, China's Ambassador to Pakistan, Luo Zhaohui, alleged that ETIM fighters from Xinjiang “sometimes use Pakistani soil for their activities” and are thus “trying to sabotage [the] Pakistan-China relationship.” Such security challenge potentially threatens aspirations on both sides to transform Pakistan into an energy and commercial corridor connecting the Middle East and Africa to China via a network of railway and highway linkages.

A second important component of China's response to terrorism or criminal violence is its involvement in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [SCO]. Originally founded in 1996 as the “Shanghai Five,” the organization has become much more institutionalized and more focused on problems related to transnational violence. One manifestation of this new focus is the creation of the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure [RATS], based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Although the RATS is largely an analytical body that coordinates the operations of its member states, it is credited with disrupting terrorist plots or at least reducing the “functional environment” that allows such organizations to flourish. In March 2009, General Sergey Smirnov of the Russian Federal Security Service [FSB] credited RATS (and the SCO generally) with disrupting 97 terrorist plots, 50 of which “were planned to be carried out in public places.”

The SCO also provides an important venue for China to improve its military counterterrorism capacity. In August 2007, the SCO held its first joint military exercise (involving all SCO members)—known as “Peace Mission 2007—in China and Russia. This followed a similar exercise (involving solely Russia and China) conducted in 2005. In addition, China has conducted a number of counterterrorism-themed bilateral military exercises with countries such as India, Pakistan and Tajikistan, among others.

Like many rising states before it, China has discovered that an increased commercial and political presence around the world can sometimes entail significant risks. However, China's response to terrorist or criminal violence—changing business practices abroad, urging host government action, sharing of information, and increasing institutional capacity (through SCO and other mechanisms)—suggests that China's terrorism challenge could provide a strategic opportunity for great power cooperation and coordination. Such cooperation could severely limit the enabling environment for global terrorism and establish a bulwark against the sort of national and transnational violence that threatens not only Chinese interests, but those of the entire world. •

A homecoming for Kashmir's jihadists?

Praveen Swami



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Over 100 members of the once-feared Hizb ul-Mujahideen have returned to their homes in Kashmir

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India is considering opening dialogue with secessionist groups as well as the Hizb ul-Mujahideen itself

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Means need to be found to allow returning jihadists to resume their lives

For fourteen days and nights in September, 1994, Abdul Rasheed marched across the 5,000-metre passes of the inner Himalayas to train for war at the Hizb ul-Mujahideen camp in Pakistan.

Part of a group of 116 volunteers from across Kashmir, Rasheed's journey took him across the Kaobal pass near Dras, across the Line of Control [LoC] to the Hizb ul-Mujahideen's forward base at Gilgit, by jeep over the dirt road to Skardu and then by bus to Muzaffarabad. Eight men fled home; twelve died of cold and high-altitude sickness, and were buried where they fell.

Early this summer, Rasheed walked into a police station in Srinagar, the capital of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, to report his return home. His homeward journey that began with a Pakistan International Airlines flight from Karachi to Kathmandu, and a string of train and bus rides linking the Gangetic plains to the Kashmir. His Pakistani wife, Nyla Zamaan Abbasi and their children, four year old Haroun Rashid and two year old Amna Rashid, were with him.

More than hundred former Hizb ul-Mujahideen operatives and their families have returned home from Pakistan since 2005; nine this summer alone. Many have returned knowing they could face time in prison—or worse. Kulgam resident Mohammad Jalil Amin, for example, served ten months in jail when he was arrested returning home through Kathmandu in June, 2006. Naseer Ahmad Pathan, who crossed the minefields along the LoC with his Pakistani wife Naseema Akhtar and four children in 2005, is still uncertain if his family will be allowed to stay on in India. Rasheed faces his prosecution; his wife, possible deportation. In June, 2007, Hizb ul-Mujahideen operatives Irfan Ahmad Ganai, Fayyaz Ahmad Bhat, and Javed Ahmad Khan, were shot dead while trying to return home through the LoC.

For much of this summer, New Delhi has been working quietly to begin a dialogue with a coalition of secessionist groups, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference—a dialogue that fell apart during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's first term in office. Even as the effort to resume dialogue with the APHC proceeds ahead, though, Jammu and Kashmir's major political parties have been calling for talks with the Hizb ul-Mujahideen, as well as a ceasefire that will let hundreds of cadre like Rasheed return home. Members of the ruling National Conference party are believed to have sent out feelers to senior figures in the Islamist terror group.

Little remains of the Hizb ul-Mujahideen's once-feared forces, which in the early 1990s were believed to have numbered several thousand.

Jammu and Kashmir Police officials say the code-name 'Ghazi Misbahuddin', traditionally assigned to the Hizb ul-Mujahideen's overall commander for military operations in the state is now used by Gandoh-based commander Ghulam Abbas. But beyond funneling funds, India's intelligence services nor the Jammu and Kashmir Police believe, Abbas has little work: there is no longer any army to command.

Instead, the Hizb ul-Mujahideen has fractured into small and largely-ineffective cells. Mohammad Shafi, who uses the code-names 'Dawood' and 'Doctor', presides over the small group of operatives still active in northern Kashmir. Born in the village of Papchan, near Bandipora, Shafi is among the Hizb ul-Mujahideen's most senior field operatives. He joined the organization in 1992, soon after finishing school. But there have been signs, in recent years, that Shafi's commitment to the jihad is waning. Police say he initiated communication with the authorities in 2007-2008, to explore an exit route.

Both Qayoom Najar and Majid Bisati, Shafi's lieutenants, are believed to have sought to survive by integrating their operations with those of the Lashkar-e-Taiba. However, the effort fell through because the Lashkar itself had haemorrhaged commanders in counter-terrorism operations targeting the group.

In the central Kashmir area, the Hizb ul-Mujahideen has only active unit. Mushataq Ahmad, a one-time resident of the village of Vorpach near Ganderbal, leads a group of three ethnic-Kashmiris and two Pakistani nationals. Despite the political significance of Ganderbal—it is Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah's constituency—the Hizb ul-Mujahideen has been unable mount any operations of consequence.

Things aren't much better for the Hizb ul-Mujahideen in southern Kashmir. The organization's top bomb-making expert Pervez Ahmad Dar—known by the code-name 'Perez Musharraaf'—executed a number of attacks on military convoys while serving as the Awantipora-

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area commander. He has, however, been unable to stage a major operation in over a year. Shabbir Ahmad, named in police records as the perpetrator of the killings of at least three civilians in the recent elections to India's Parliament, has done nothing since.

Mudassir Ahmad Shah, the third major Hizb ul-Mujahideen operative still active in the Awantipora area, has had little success either. Born in the village of Gadikhal, near Awantipora, Shah came from a family with an Islamist tradition; his father, Abdul Ahad Shah, was a Jamaat-e-Islami activist of long standing. Having joined the organization while studying to become a dentist, police sources say, Shah trained as an improvised explosive device fabricator—an enterprise which cost him an eye. He is alleged to have been responsible for a string of bombings in Srinagar and Banihal in 2006-2007. Shah, police say, left for Pakistan in 2007, before returning home in May, 2008, but has been inactive. Like his north Kashmir counterparts, his unit has been attempting to tap the operational resources of the Lashkar, to no avail.

Perhaps the only significant-sized Hizb ul-Mujahideen unit in southern Kashmir is the Kellar-based group of Fayyaz Pir, which is thought to have recruited at least twelve Shopian residents to its ranks in recent weeks. Sangarwani-born Pir is thought to have joined the Hizb ul-Mujahideen seven years ago, and stuck with the organization even as its south Kashmir leadership was annihilated in a successful police-led campaign that began in 2006. Pir's new recruits, though, have received only rudimentary training in the Pir Panjal mountains, rather than formal military instruction at the Hizb ul-Mujahideen's camps in Pakistan. Like other groups, though, Pir's cell has been unable to stage a single major operation.

Early in February, at a rally held by jihadist groups in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan-administered Kashmir, Hizb ul-Mujahideen chief Mohammad Yusuf Shah—widely known by the pseudonym Syed Salahuddin—appeared to rule out an end to war.

"Jihad will continue", the Urdu-language newspaper *Roznamcha Jasarat* reported him as saying, "until the independence of Kashmir [from India]". He lashed out at the Pakistan government for proscribing the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad—both of which were represented at the rally, despite being proscribed organizations. "If there is a setback to the war [in Jammu and Kashmir] due to the cowardice of the [Pakistan] government", Yusuf Shah said, "then this war will need to be fought in Islamabad and Lahore".

Language like this, though, is at some distance from reality as it is being experienced by the Hizb ul-Mujahideen's several hundred-strong reserves in Muzaffarabad. Few have demonstrated any willingness to return home to swell the depleted ranks of the organization.

Rashid's story is instructive. Put to work as an apprentice shawl weaver after he dropped out of school in the eighth grade, Rashid found in the Hizb ul-Mujahideen's jihad a romance and agency missing in his life. In 1998, ailing from poor conditions at the Hizb ul-Mujahideen's Jangal Mangal camp in Muzaffarabad and his religious nationalism stilled by years of watching comrades sent to death in an apparently-unwinnable campaign against Indian forces, he left the organization. Living off a subsidy made available by Pakistan authorities, he apprenticed with Muzaffarabad tailor Shakeel Ahmad Abbasi. Later, he married Abbasi's sister. Having watched others make their way home to India, Rashid's thoughts turned to returning to his land-owning family. Early this summer, Rashid paid a local travel agent to arrange for passports, visas and tickets to Nepal.

Last year, responding to pressure from his war-weary rank-and-file, Yusuf Shah had ordered a ceasefire during October, on the occasion of the month of Ramzan. Later, he called for solution in Jammu and Kashmir modeled on Northern Ireland—a formulation that suggested that the organization would be willing to disarm. Earlier, in August 2006, he offered to initiate a dialogue with New Delhi and offered a conditional ceasefire.

In recent weeks, though, Yusuf Shah's language has been less conciliatory. Perhaps fearful that the APHC's political secessionists will exclude his organization in a future dialogue, he lashed out at "separatist leaders who were begging for talks with India". He also argued that "Pakistan's disinterest to highlight [the] Kashmir [issue] has disappointed and angered Kashmiris".

Is progress possible?

Shah's family embodies traditional middle-class aspirations—not radical Islamism. His oldest son, Shahid Yusuf, works as a teacher, Javed Yusuf is an agricultural technologist. Shakeel Yusuf works as a medical assistant at a government-run hospital. Wahid Yusuf, 24, graduated from the Government Medical College in Srinagar, where the family's contacts helped him obtain a seat through a quota controlled by the Jammu and Kashmir government. Momin Yusuf, the youngest of Shah's sons, is an engineer.

Even if Shah isn't willing to give his defeated army a chance to build the kinds of lives he gave his sons, peace-building requires authorities to find ways to give them a future•

Asian Conflicts Reports

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