CENS – GFF Workshop

The Impact of Identity Politics on Violent Extremism: Regional Perspectives

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CENS – GFF WORKSHOP
THE IMPACT OF IDENTITY POLITICS ON VIOLENT EXTREMISM: REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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CONTENTS PAGE

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This report summarises the proceedings of the conference as interpreted by the assigned rapporteurs and editor of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this report.

The conference adheres to a variation of the Chatham House rules. Accordingly, beyond the points expressed in the prepared papers, no attributions have been included in this conference report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CENS-GFF Workshop on the Impact of Identity Politics on Violent Extremism: Regional Perspectives was held on 24-25 October 2011 at the Marina Mandarin in Singapore. Jointly organised by the Centre of Excellence for National Security at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies and the Global Futures Forum with the support of the National Security Coordination Secretariat, the workshop was the third installment in a series of workshops focused on exploring the issues of radicalisation and violent extremism in various regions. The first workshop was held in Monterey, California in April 2011 and the second was held in Madrid in June where participants examined topical concerns stemming out of the Americas and Europe respectively. In Singapore, the regions in focus were South and Southeast Asia.

The two-day workshop consisted of a framework address, a dinner address and four panels that comprised of speakers with expertise from diverse backgrounds. In his framework address, Kumar Ramakrishna employed a broad identity politics framework centred on Vamik Volkan's concept of the "Group Tent" to shed light on factors that could nudge religious fundamentalist groups toward violent action. At dinner, David Belt addressed the issue of radicalisation to violence based on a four-factor conceptual framework. Panel 1 discussed strategic trends in political extremism in South and Southeast Asia and the structural conditions of their emergence. Panels 2 and 3 closely examined the nexus between political identities and violent extremism based on the empirical studies of specific cases from around the regions and demonstrated how various forms of identity politics served to both sustain violent extremism as well as work against violence. Panel 4 then looked into the management of extremism and extremist threat trends in the two regions. Speakers from academia, the government, and civil society highlighted various counter-extremism programmes currently in place and best practices from their respective countries. Breakout sessions held over two days saw to participants coming together to further discuss and analyse key insights gleaned from the various addresses and panel discussions. By way of wrapping up, Julie Cohen compared findings across the three regional workshops and highlighted key areas of study which should continue to be further developed in order for security stakeholders to achieve a better grasp of evolving trends and threats in the region and beyond.

WELCOME REMARKS

In his welcome remarks, **Bilveer Singh** said that the aim of the joint workshop between the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) and the Global Futures Forum (GFF) was to create a multinational community of interest dealing with issues of homeland security and to engage in a collective analysis of global security concerns. At a recent similar collaboration in July, CENS and the GFF had come together to address the issue of cyber-security; this time the focus would be on violent extremism through the lens of identity politics.

For the purposes of the workshop, identity politics was taken to mean the organisation and mobilisation of individuals and groups in the pursuit of specific economic, political or cultural goals on the basis of shared characteristics such as ethnic, racial, religious, class, diasporic and other kinds of identity markers. Designed to comparatively explore the links between political identities and political behaviours, the workshop was meant as a platform to learn from past lessons of successes and failures in order to forge the path ahead.

Singh highlighted a number of issues that would be addressed over the next couple of days which included how political identities were formed and how they could be used to mobilise, radicalise and sustain various forms of political extremism in the regions in focus. The workshop would also conversely shed light on how acts of political extremism could in turn feed and reinforce political identities. The matter would prove complex, as well as circular and protracted at times.

Finally, Singh remarked that it nonetheless remained necessary to keep in mind that while identity politics could escalate to violence in some cases, they would not in others despite similar on-the-ground dynamics. An appreciation of such examples of peace and non-violence was equally important in aiding current understanding of the nexus between political identities and political extremism and between political identities and political peace.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GLOBAL FUTURES FORUM

Patricia H.M. Morrissey introduced the Global Futures Forum (GFF) as a multinational community that aimed to bring together a diverse group of government and private sector subject matter experts. Initiated in 2005, the Forum endeavoured to stimulate cross-cultural and interdisciplinary thinking as well as challenge prevailing assumptions about emerging and long-range global security challenges.

There were seven Communities of Interest (COIs) within the GFF, namely: (i) Radicalisation and Counterterrorism, (ii) Emerging and Disruptive Technology, (iii) Proliferation, (iv) Illicit Trafficking, (v) Strategic Foresight and Warning, (vi) Human and Natural Resource Security, and (vii) Practice and Organisation of Intelligence. These COIs held international roundtables and workshops that would include analysts from intelligence, diplomatic, defense

and homeland security agencies as well as partners from academia and non-governmental organisations. Working in tandem with CENS on the present workshop on identity politics and violent extremism was the GFF Radicalisation and Counterterrorism COI, and its objectives included seeking out root causes of violence as well as understanding socio-political trends leading to extremism.

Morrissey concluded by highlighting proposed GFF programmes for 2012, including one which would look at the impact of transformational technologies on international security and stability, and another at the evolving role of intelligence support to multi-agency and multinational operations. More regional workshops focused on the issues of identity politics and violent extremism were slated for the Caucasus, Southeast Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Additionally, a GFF General Meeting that would assess and evaluate the accomplishments of the various GFF programmes and a review of the final draft of Global Trends 2030 would also take place.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

WORKSHOP SERIES FINDINGS: A SNAPSHOT

David Belt noted that throughout history, concepts like "symbolic struggle" (Bourdieu 1990), "cultural framings" (McAdam 1996) and "symbolic politics" (Kaufman 2001) had been used to describe identity politics. Given that any sort of social or political movement depended heavily on the construction and maintenance of a strong sense of identity to underwrite political actions, Belt recognised identity politics as a key component of both mobilisation (i.e. al-Qaeda) and radicalisation (i.e. al-Qaedaism). He argued that identity had both primordial and constructed elements, with the former being the more durable feature and the latter involving deliberate agency.

Belt remarked that the strategy of identity politics involved a "labour of categorisation" (Bourdieu) in which the aim was to naturalise a particular and often hierarchical societal order in favour of a specific culturally attuned Self over the Other. He added that political elites at both the national and individual levels utilised resources extant in society such as ideational, psychological, material and social structures to achieve their objectives. State elites, for example, engaged in national identity politics to manage minorities, gain and keep domestic legitimacy as well as preserve their international standing on the world stage as Iran had done with the reconstruction of its foreign policy to reflect an Islamic identity and a revolutionary resistance against a secular Western-led order.

Noting that identity politics also took place at the sub-state and individual levels, Belt drew attention to the notions of legitimising identities and resistance identities at the social movement level, and the peer or mentor-led political identifications that existed at the individual level.

FRAMEWORK ADDRESS

IDENTITY POLITICS AND VIOLENT RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

In his framework address, **Kumar Ramakrishna** highlighted Vamik Volkan's idea of a 'Group Tent' as a central concept of identity politics, recast religious fundamentalism as a form of cognitive radicalisation, and discussed the conditions under which religious fundamentalism might turn violent. He argued that the group tent represented a group's ethnic, religious or ideological identity, and fundamentalism was essentially an attempt by its advocates to defend their group tent. Should the group tent be perceived by in-group members to come under an existential threat, the group would feel constricted and embattled, and fundamentalism would ensue. Religious fundamentalism could thus be seen as a form of embattled spirituality in the form of cognitive radicalisation.

Ramakrishna explained that cognitive radicalisation was a process in which an individual would adopt ideas that were severely at odds with those of the mainstream, refute the legitimacy of the existing social order, and seek to replace it with a new structure based on a completely different belief system. Violent radicalisation occurred when an individual took the additional step of using violence to further the views derived from cognitive radicalism.

However, Ramakrishna remarked that religious fundamentalism would not turn violent unless it intersected with certain cultural, ideological and small-group factors that could facilitate the transition to violence. Drawing on Hofstede's work, Ramakrishna argued that collectivist, large power-distance cultures rendered people more vulnerable to manipulation by charismatic religious fundamentalists and uncertainty-avoidant cultures tended to be relatively xenophobic, intolerant and prone to fundamentalist outlooks; further, those drawn to ideology were more action-oriented as ideology functioned to diagnose problems, identify enemies and suggest a course of action.

To understand how a non-violent extremist could turn violent, Ramakrishna suggested looking at the dynamics of small religious fundamentalist cult-like groups which were isolated from the mainstream. Religious fundamentalism could mutate into a violent form when the free-floating, inchoate prejudices of the wider cognitively radicalised sub-culture were intensified and focused on a consciously held violent ideology. Nevertheless, an enabling environment that was already steep in socio-economic and political grievances and the opportunity to engage in violence were also necessary elements for such a transition to occur.

DISCUSSION

A participant asked how the process through which non-violent extremism became violent could be applied to the prison setting. Ramakrishna replied that the element of isolation in the prison environment was an important factor; cases of violent extremism had shown that the transition usually occurred when a group was both physically and intellectually isolated. The presence of a charismatic leader was also necessary because the leader would define reality for the group, suppress dissent, ensure compliance with group norms, and most importantly, instill a strong sense of 'us' and 'them'.

In response to a question raised regarding individuals who joined violent groups not primarily on the basis of ideology, Ramakrishna explained that it was helpful to tease apart two things: one, joining a group, and two, executing violent plots. He believed that most people joined because of social, kinship or discipleship factors. However, behavioral elements that stemmed from a justifying ideology, dehumanising rhetoric and the absence of countervailing views, particularly in small cult-like groups, were evident when it came to making the transition to violence.

PANEL 1

STRATEGIC TRENDS IN POLITICAL EXTREMISM IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA, THEIR CONDITIONS OF EMERGENCE AND THE ROLE OF IDENTITY POLITICS

Identity Politics: The Pathway to Growing Extremism

In his presentation, **Muniruzzaman** talked about the role of identity politics in cultivating extremism and the emerging strategic trends in political extremism and made recommendations to deal with such challenges. Arguing that people were either accorded or denied things in society based on their identities, he explained that identity security was influenced by, among other things, an increase in identity awareness within and outside of cultural characteristics, the diminution in the levels of tolerance, modernisation affecting traditional cultures as well as the spread of discriminatory practices arising out of globalisation and economic growth. In such a setting, identities were becoming increasingly divided along social, political and economic lines, and among the divided communities, the more marginalised ones were likely to take the extremist path in order to fight for the resources they considered themselves deprived of.

Muniruzzaman said that identity politics involved a particular degree of awareness of oneself as a member of a distinct group that was often perceived to be oppressed or deprived, and more importantly, the anger associated with such awareness. He said there were a number of factors that could cause unstable identity security and extremism. For one, globalisation as well as migration trends made people more aware of cultural differences, and in the case of South Asian countries, governments often resorted to religious and ethnic politics to empower their positions, giving rise to extremists. Another factor that contributed to extremism was insecurities stemming from deteriorating economic conditions because serious

social issues such as mass unemployment and income inequality often followed. Further, foreign interferences such as the "war on terror" also had impact on various socio-cultural beliefs and value structures in South Asia. Finally, the large youth population in the region could prove to be a destabilising factor because of the social and political instability they faced.

Having provided the backdrop for the formation of identity politics, Muniruzzaman pointed out a number of emerging strategic trends in political extremism, including confrontational politics and political violence; growth in right-wing extremism; political misuse of youth; instrumental use of religion and religious extremism; dormant radicalisation from growing discrepancy between the elite and non-elite; ethnic conflict arising from social and economic deprivation induced by climate change; misperceived international policy; an esoteric appeal of violent ideologies and intellectual radicalisation; "identi-cide" through the destruction of symbolic figures of a particular group; radicalisation derived from extreme deprivation and marginalisation; growth of identity-less or stateless group; a rise in the number of people with a state of confused identity, as in the case of returning migrants from the Gulf; and finally, self-radicalisation. He noted that identity politics was only going to become more dynamic and complex.

In closing, Muniruzzaman recommended some ways in which to counter the ongoing challenges posed by identity politics and political extremism. He said it was important for governments to ensure inclusive economic growth and properly manage different identity groups and their legitimate demands. Governments also needed to build strong, efficient and accountable state institutions. On the societal side, dialogues and cultural exchanges should be promoted and commonalities among the different identity groups should be explored. Education and creative inclusion of the youths in societal development were important too.

Southeast Asia's Long-Term Challenge: Countering Violent Extremism through Social Engagement and Identification

Greg Barton spoke about countering radicalisation and extremism in Indonesia through social engagement. At the outset, he cautioned against over-utilising the concept of identity politics to address the issue of radicalisation because the concept held varying degrees of utility across regions and time. As a case in point, he argued that identity politics could better explain political phenomena in South Asia, such as identity-based political violence involving insurgencies and guerrilla warfare, than it could in Southeast Asia, with a few exceptions such as the ongoing conflict in southern Thailand and the Philippines. In the case of Indonesia, while it could partially explain the conflicts in Aceh and Papua as well as in Ambon and Poso, it could not fully explain those that stem out of the Salafi jihadi ideology.

Nevertheless, Barton said identity politics could still help shed light on how individuals respond to the Salafi jihadi ideology, choose their targets and execute their plans. The concept, in such a context, would then serve as a useful tool to counter radical Salafism. In counter-radicalisation, it was especially crucial to counter the narrative as it was a central element of the radicalisation process. Identity and solidarity, fostered by a sense of belonging to a particular community, played even greater roles. It was thus necessary for individuals from such communities to be linked to alternative social networks and affiliated

with the broader national community. By redefining one's relationship with the broader community, Barton pointed out that efforts to disengage individuals from violence could still be achieved on a large scale despite the fact that de-radicalisation initiatives rarely succeeded. He believed that individuals would not impulsively engage in violence, but rather justify their behaviours based on the narrative framework. Getting violent radicals to defer their acts of violence by putting forth arguments against the need for immediate political violence was thereby a crucial aspect of disengagement.

Barton recommended directly involving moderate and respected religious leaders in such dialogues so that violent narratives could be countered based on established religious knowledge and understanding rather than an over-focus on countering a narrative. It was important to keep in mind that de-radicalisation or disengagement from violence was a long and gradual process and it required all stakeholders to be engaged in the effort.

Islamism and Politics in Indonesia

Speaking on the topic of political Islam in Indonesia, **Muhadi Sugiono** remarked that it was important to understand the relationship between politics and identity, particularly when examining Islamic radicalism. His main argument was firstly that the politics of identity took place in a historical context that was actively shaped by various nation building projects in Indonesia. In other words, Islamism was not simply an excess of ideology but rather a phenomenon which emerged from the structural changes taking place in the country. His second argument was that Islamism was today largely a derivative of the past legacy of the New Order politics, under which Islam had failed to find or serve a common agenda.

Sugiono elaborated on the two ways in which political Islam was conventionally understood in Indonesia. First, political Islam was often understood based on a strong emphasis on the role of ideology. While ideology did play an important role, such an understanding tended to overlook the differences which existed within the political Islam spectrum, and many dissimilar groups were lumped together under the category of radical Islam. He argued that this led to radicalism becoming an explanatory concept to understand political Islam, and eventually even closely associated with terrorism.

The second understanding of political Islam was based on the relationship between political economy and political Islam. Some had argued the necessity to look at political Islam in the context of a triangular relationship between the religion, capital development, and the state. The capitalist bureaucratic state attempted to suppress economic grievances that were borne out of the development process and incorporated demands into the folds of the state. Sugiono said the problem with such an approach was that it did not explain how much of the violent behaviour of some Islamist organisations was actually related to the New Order authoritarianism. In a similar vein, it would be too hasty to consider violence simply as an act committed by underprivileged Muslims.

In sum, Sugiono said that the understanding of political Islam based on ideology meant an Islamisation of politics of the state, whereas the understanding based on political economy meant a politicisation of Islam. Sugiono concluded that political Islam should be explored within the country's political context and it was important to understand that Islam had internally diverse characteristics as well. Political Islam could neither be understood simply as a radical ideology nor as a product of structural development in Indonesia.

DISCUSSION

A participant asked Sugiono to clarify and elaborate how he thought Islamism related to the formation of citizenship in Indonesia. Sugiono responded that he utilised the concept of citizenship in the context of identity rather than in its legal sense. He further explained that the formation of political identities in Indonesia and a sense of Indonesian-ness were significantly shaped by political Islam.

Another participant enquired if Barton thought counter-radicalisation efforts largely comprised of in-community religious dialogues in which external actors did not have a role or might even upset the process. Barton said that there were some parts of the process that could only be carried out by interlocutors with certain religious authority to make the engagement effective. However, he also stressed the importance of promoting the radicals' sense of belonging to a broader national community; such efforts would gradually recalibrate such individuals' justification for violence and their sense of victimisation and would ultimately steer them away from violent extremism towards constructive engagement within the society. Religious communities had a crucial role in counter-radicalisation, but a whole-of-society approach which could involve the international community was necessary as well.

Finally, Muniruzzaman was asked what kinds of future trends he would expect to see in South Asia given the current emerging strategic trends in political extremism he highlighted in his presentation. Muniruzzaman believed that the process of radicalisation and extremism in South Asia would accelerate in the future and would manifest in various forms besides religion. The process of marginalisation in South Asia would also cause the growth of extremism, something that could already be witnessed in India with the Maoist insurgencies. In addition, the youth bulge in South Asia implied that there would also be an increase in techno-extremists who were capable of utilising technology as a tool to assert their demands.

PANEL 2

THE NEXUS OF IDENTITY POLITICS AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA: CASE STUDIES I

Bangsamoroism and the Nexus of Identity Politics and Violent Extremism in the Southern Philippines

Rommel Banlaoi presented on the nexus of identity politics and violent extremism in the southern Philippines. He provided an overview of the current unrest in the area and explained that identity politics was an analytical lens through which one could understand the development of the Bangsamoro identity as well as the justification for continued violent armed struggle towards self-determination. He explained that the Moro identity was both ethnic and religious and it provided a means to distinguish the Moros from the majority Christian Filipinos; the sharpened distinction had resulted in ethnic and sectarian conflicts for over four decades.

Banlaoi pointed out four major Muslim groups that promoted the idea of a Bangsamoro identity and were engaged in various acts of violent extremism: the Moro National Liberation Front, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the Abu Sayyaf Group and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement. Other emerging groups included the Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement, the Al Khobar Group and the Awliya Freedom Fighters.

Three intertwining factors contributed to violence in the region: the concept of 'minoritisation', economic marginalisation, and social and political exclusion. The Bangsamoro people referred to themselves as a "minoritised people" rather than a minority because despite being the majority in Mindanao in the 1900s, population numbers dropped to 20 percent by the twentieth century, caused in large part by various land policies implemented by the government. They also experienced widespread social and political exclusion after decades of negative stereotyping and high levels of poverty.

Banlaoi concluded that while identity politics appeared to be the main driver of violence in Mindanao, identities were not static and immutable. As such, the strongly held Bangsamoro identity could continue to evolve and change in a way that contributed to conflict resolution and social transformation. He hoped that this contentious identity might one day lead to lasting solutions towards ending violent extremism in the southern Philippines.

Exploring the Nexus between Islamist Identity Politics in Indonesia and Jihadism: The Cases of Jemaah Islamiyah, Laskar Jihad and Hizbut Tahrir

In his presentation, **Greg Fealy** applied identity politics theories to Islamist politics in Indonesia. At the outset, he remarked that his references to Islamists concerned those who sought to formally apply Islamic law and policies to the political system. He argued that Islamist politics could be regarded a minority phenomenon in the country. In the past three elections since 1999, Islamist parties only accounted for 16-22% of the national vote; yet despite that, Islamist parties claimed to speak on behalf of the broader Islamic community.

Two streams of the Islamist discourse could be discerned: a universalist discourse and an Indonesian-specific discourse. Both shared a very powerful sense of injustice and oppression as they saw themselves the victims of non-Muslim communities and secular nationalists, and both advocated an uncompromising return to a more authentic form of Islam. The universalistic discourse drew heavily from international Islamist discourses, particularly the Middle East. It asserted that there were global infidel or kaffir forces that were inherently hostile against Islam and would stop at nothing to destroy it. The discourse claimed that the movement against Islam was led by Jews and Christians and their campaign existed across time and space and their efforts involved a range of activities, from asserting cultural and intellectual rights to the use of violence against Muslims.

The Indonesian-specific discourse asserted that the Muslim community in Indonesia had been systematically marginalised by the Christians, other non-Muslims and the secularists. The discourse had many components, including the Dutch colonial campaign to erase Islam's heritage, secularists' conspiracies to defeat Muslim parties, ongoing campaign of Christianisation, state aggression towards Muslims, national support for deviant sects and religious liberalism with the purpose of undermining the purity and cohesion of the faith, and Christian communal attacks on Muslims.

Fealy showcased three case studies — *Jemaah Islamiyah, Laskar Jihad and Hizbut Tahrir* — to illustrate both discourses. All three groups shared universalistic and Indonesian-specific discourses, all perceived Islam as vulnerable and under attack, and all advocated fighting back albeit in different forms. *Jemaah Islamiyah*, a Salafi Jihadi terrorist organisation established in 1993, was arguably the most dangerous group having advocated the most extreme measures to address the plight of Islam. Fealy however noted that only a minority in JI undertook terrorist actions; the majority had opposed such activities with the understanding that Islamic law could not validate the use of terrorism against civilians. Of particular importance was that although all group members were exposed to similar influences, not everyone agreed on the use of violence. Hence, within a reasonably cohesive community, there still existed a remarkable diversity in views.

Laskar Jihad, a Salafi paramilitary organisation with a narrower focus compared to *Jemaah Islamiyah*, was a group that targeted Christians because it believed Christians were responsible for attacking Muslims. The organisation dissolved itself in October 2002, partly because of disapproval from certain factions in the Middle East and partly because of financial problems. After 2002, only a handful became involved in terrorist activities. Some of its leaders had in fact become the main opponents of terrorism. *Hizbut Tahrir* had not engaged in violence at all, and despite a very radical and absolutist rhetoric, it appeared to be a peaceful channel for the expression of Islamist identity politics.

In conclusion, Fealy argued that there had actually been limited violence resulting from Islamists identity politics in Indonesia. There had been a diverse range of responses to perceived oppression and injustice, and violence had been a path pursued by a very small minority among the individuals involved in the discourse.

Cadre Training as a Means of Preventative Radicalisation? A Study of the PKS Islamist Party in Indonesia

Locating *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* (PKS) within the context of the post-Suharto political environment, **Farish Noor** questioned whether party cadre training was a means to prevent radicalisation. A party with Islamist credentials, PKS emerged as the seventh largest party in Indonesia at the last general elections with 2.5 million members. As such, PKS could be categorised as a national-level party with national aspirations and comparable to Indonesia's other political parties, distinct from the fringe existence of many of the more vocal and violent radical groups in the country.

Noor noted that an interesting aspect of Islamist parties was their ability to maintain the cohesion of their identity over time. In the case of PKS, Noor surmised that one factor that might account for this was its cadre system. The system appeared similar to the ones used in Islamist political groups in Malaysia such as *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (PAS) and *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* (ABIM). As a state party with statist objectives, the PKS cadre training material was geared towards state capture. Its *tarbiyyah* system (training programme) was different from those undertaken by other conservative Salafi groups. The PKS did not focus only on spiritual *tarbiyyah* classes but a large component of the cadre process involved practical skills such as *tarbiyyah fikriyyah*, or intellectual training involving a diverse array of subjects ranging from Marxism to the workings of the capital markets, *tarbiyyah maidaniyyah* which involved operational knowledge such as ways to canvass for opinions and write opinion pieces for newspapers, and *tarbiyyah harakiyyah*, or organisational training on how to run a political party. In short, the PKS cadre system was designed to ensure the loyalty of its members as well as to keep its focus on ultimate capture of the state through the ballot box.

Given the objectives and methods of the PKS, Noor was of the opinion that while the party could be categorised within the broad folds of Islamist parties in the country, it was clearly distinct from the more conservative Salafi groups that had negative views of politics. The PKS therefore often found itself in a difficult position. The party was constantly criticised by more conservative groups for being involved in democratic politics that they regarded *haram*. At the same time, the PKS also had to deal with mainstream national secular political parties suspicious that it would Islamise the state. Notwithstanding, within such a complex political environment and in keeping with its overall objective of state capture, the PKS cadre system had helped keep its members committed to its main cause and away from all forms of radical violent antics as a means to improve its chances in mainstream politics. In sum, while the politics of the PKS remained Islamist, the party appeared firmly committed to win power within the democratic political process.

New Generation, Old Grievances: Insurgency in Southern Thailand

Don Pathan began his presentation with a brief overview of the historical context which formed the background to the current unrest in southern Thailand. Once part of the independent Sultanate of Patani, the area was formally annexed to the Thai state at the turn of the last century. An artificial border thus divided the people in the area between two countries, Malaysia and Thailand. While the Malays on the Malaysian side had come to terms with their citizenship, the Malays in Thailand continued to negotiate this aspect of their identity. However, armed insurgency did not surface until the 1960s. The insurgency arose due to the failed policy of forced assimilation of the Patani Malays by the Thai state. Pathan stressed that for the Patani Malays, being Malay and being Muslim were two sides of the same coin. That explained their resistance to the Thai state constructed identity; for them, adopting another identity equated to the prospect of abandoning their Islamic faith.

Pathan remarked that a new generation of Muslim separatists surfaced in mid-2001, but it was not until a January 2004 militant raid of a military camp that the Thai government saw that it could no longer deny the political underpinnings of the attacks. The government was thus forced to acknowledge that they had to deal with a fresh wave of Malay Muslim separatists.

Pathan argued that the current groups of militants arose in an organic, decentralised fashion as loose networks of cells. He gauged that about 90 percent of all the villages in the area had a cell. Most of the villagers knew who the militants were and while they might not agree with the brutality used, they would not turn the militants over to the Thai authorities.

Since 2006, there had been many attempts at peace processes between the militants and the Thai authorities. However, the conflict had not been resolved due to the proliferation of competing interests brought forward during the negotiations. The lack of unity and solidarity among the militant groups had proven to be a great obstacle in conflict resolution.

DISCUSSION

A participant enquired about the existence of connections between violent groups in the Philippines and in Indonesia. Banlaoi responded that individuals from Indonesia as well as Malaysia and Singapore had been travelling to the Philippines and were connecting with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Abu Sayyaf Group. These militants from around the region helped provide training on bombs and other tradecraft to the local groups who in return provided them with a safe haven. Banlaoi further emphasised that the presence of such foreign militants had real and potential effects on the intensification of the radicalisation of local groups with their own brand of extremist ideological leanings.

To a question regarding the reason behind an increasing number of groups fighting for a Bangsamoro identity regardless of their shared common causes and ideologies, Banlaoi said that while all groups adhered to the same idea of a Bangsamoro nation, their motivations differed. Some groups might be motivated by personal vendettas while others were more Islamists in nature. The conflict was further complicated by the fact that banditry, organised crimes and clan feuding all entwined with armed violence in the Philippines.

Another participant asked the speakers for their projections regarding their respective areas of study over the next three to five years. Fealy said the next three to five years looked fairly bleak for *Jemaah Islamiyah* but voiced concern that the group would still retain the ability to revive itself and renew its membership through an informal network of schools; and while *Hizbut Tahrir* was probably the fastest growing Islamist organisation in Indonesia, there were limitations to its growth and appeal due to its utopian ideals which did not promise much in terms of material benefits. Commenting on PKS and PAS, Noor noted that both parties would continue to last but what forms they would take depended on the political calculations of their leadership. Noor said PKS would remain relevant only if it could manage to maintain a more moderate outlook, but that would however isolate the more conservative factions; the cadre system was hence important to maintain discipline and cohesion. Finally, in relation to the Patani Malays, Pathan explained that promises of autonomy from the authority had not materialised into anything concrete, and while the Patani Malays were not opposed to being a part of the Thai state, they remained concerned over issues of justice, equality and social mobility. Pathan added that recent ideas floated by the Thai government to involve the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia in peace negotiations with the various separatist groups had been hindered by the lack of unity among many factions.

DINNER ADDRESS

THE NEXUS OF IDENTITY POLITICS AND EXTREMISM: THE GLOBAL CONTEXT AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

David Belt spoke on the issue of radicalisation to violent extremism. Based on a conceptual framework put forth by the Quilliam Foundation, four factors were found to be instrumental in the radicalisation process: political grievances, crisis of identity, ideology and socialisation.

Political grievances were necessary ingredients of radicalisation. They were closely tied to perceived notions of shame and humiliation, and such sentiments, alongside the idea of fictive kinship, arose particularly when global events, like the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, were drawn into and intertwined with local political gripes. Perceived injustices in faraway places were often regarded as representative experience of the community at large and Belt noted that the tendency to generalise from the particular events was a function of the internet age. Perceived relative deprivation that fed conspiratorial narratives also further fuelled political grievances.

However, evidence of political grievances alone would not necessarily radicalise an individual; experiences of personal trauma or distress leading to a crisis of identity were crucial triggers. These experiences were compounded by global factors such as migration-induced pluralism and multiculturalism. The July 2011 attacks in Norway perpetrated by right-wing extremist Anders Breivik was a prime example of that.

Ideology also played an important role in the radicalisation of an individual. While ideologies based on nationalist and ethno-nationalist movements took place on one level, the increasing de-secularisation of politics as the world became more global, modern and pluralistic created counter-movements based on, *inter alia*, particularistic religious ideologies. Belt highlighted the sub-ideology of 'resistance Islam' as forwarded by Islamist militant theorist Abu Musab al Suri, explaining that the religious

sub-ideology was a distinct, more globally focused, clash-prone subset of political Islam based on scriptural literalism that led to al-Qaedaism. Belt also noted that the rise of a participatory hostile Islamist resistance to the established global order had led to more organised radical activities in Europe, disrupting relationships within and between ethnic and religious communities.

Finally, Belt underscored that radicalisation could not occur in a vacuum; an individual had to be socialised into regarding extremist sentiments as normal, and it usually took a personal mentor or a respected peer to take an individual from the realm of the mainstream to the realm of the radical. Virtual socialisation was an added dimension for radicalisation among youths as many young people go online.

DISCUSSION

A participant pointed out the fallacy of using words whose meanings had been hijacked by extremists, like the term 'jihad'. Through uncritical acceptance of the usage of such words in the fight against extremism, governments were sending out the wrong message to the wider Muslim community. The participant was concerned that some Muslims might continue to regard those who engage in violence as being the religiously observant 'jihadi' who were simply fulfilling their obligations. He suggested, and Belt concurred, that governments should refer to violent acts exactly as what they were, instead of tagging the term 'jihad' to them in order to do away with reinforcing such misconceptions.

PANEL 3

THE NEXUS OF IDENTITY POLITICS AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA: CASE STUDIES II

Identity, Victimhood and Violence

At the outset, **Kishalay Bhattacharjee** stressed the importance of properly defining the term 'identity' because a failure to do so could lead to inadvertent radicalism and extremism. He then listed a number of groups in the South Asian region which were variously engaged in and challenged by issues and concerns stemming from the politics of identity, including insurgent groups and terrorist groups that posed the biggest threats to India's national security.

Bhattacharjee pointed out that there were groups existing in the same place and time who faced similar political challenges, but yet differ in their responses. While some chose to use armed extremism to further their cause, others favoured non-violent means. Highlighting four groups as case studies, he said the groups' similar unique cultural histories as well as a sense perceived economic deprivation and denial of entitlements formed the arguments they used to legitimise their respective radical movements.

The National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) emerged from multi-locality identities and sought to form a single national identity defined as "The Naga Identity". Their members' religious affiliation strengthened their call for a Greater Nagaland for The Christ. The Indian government had reportedly used peace overtures and strategies through financial means to negotiate with the NSCN-IM and dialled down their violence.

The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) was a case where the quest for tribal (Ahom) identity conflicted with the larger regional Assamese identity. The ULFA had seemed manageable until it expanded its base to Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan and allegedly collaborated with Pakistan's ISI. It was only through persistent engagement by the government that the ULFA softened their stance and appeared more 'Indian' in its identity orientation.

The United National Liberation Front (UNLF) served as an example of a 'lost nation' which was negotiating between its Meitei and its Hindu identities which later developed into a Mongoloid identity as well as a political revivalism. The UNLF ended up adopting economic empowerment of its people as its mission.

Finally, the CPI-Maoist group, which was involved in insurgency, was considered the largest threat to India's internal security because they had presence in almost twenty states. The group believed in the annihilation of class enemies and it used extreme violence to usher in the 'new democratic revolution' by overthrowing the government it perceived to be a semi-colonial, semi-feudal system under the neo-colonial form of indirect rule, exploitation and control. Bhattacharjee believed it was the external support for violent groups in the northeast of India on top of factors such as differing indigenous forms of identity constructions and desires for self-determination which resulted in the differing responses of these groups.

Competing Religious Extremist Movements in India: The Indian Mujahideen and the Hindu Terror

Bibhu Prasad Routray compared and contrasted Muslim and Hindu religious extremism in India by looking at the *Indian Mujahideen* (IM) and *Abhinav Bharat* (AB) as case studies. Noted for similar patterns of identity politics, ideological roots, radicalisation processes, mobilisation methods and violence capacities in pursuing their religious agendas, Routray laid out four pertinent questions as the outline of his presentation: (i) how had the extremist outfits exploited the identity debates?; (ii) how did identity movements turn violent?; (iii) what were the force multipliers behind such extremist movements?; and (iv) given the key drivers for identity politics between Muslim and Hindu religious movements in India, what were the possible future scenarios?

With regard to the first question, Routray said the IM and the AB used competing narratives of victimhood by rallying around sensitive issues concerning Muslims and Hindus respectively. To address his second question on how the movements turn violent, he shared two radicalisation pyramids detailing the evolution of the two groups over a period of time. The IM initially started as *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind* in 1941; it later developed into the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) in 1977 before finally emerging as the radical IM in 2001. The AB started out as a nationalist

movement against the British Indian State in 1904, and it later expanded to include all Hindu rights and political movements. Over time, it developed into an anti-Muslim movement and finally as a hardened militant movement in 2006 propagating Hindu majoritarianism. Routray argued that both groups possessed good leaderships that helped mould the movements into what they were today.

Routray then elaborated on each group's main force multipliers. For the IM, it had enabling environments locally and beyond the country's borders given its geographic proximity to Afghanistan and Pakistan. For the AB, the rising phenomenon of Islamism meant it could draw support for its activities from other Hindu groups. Further, political ambiguities in India significantly contributed to the establishment of sectarian radicalism and extremism.

Having noted the key drivers for both groups, Routray laid out four possible future scenarios of the IM and the AB. In the first scenario, global counterterrorism cooperation would weaken terrorist group formations. In the second scenario, the IM would officially become part of the global jihad. In the third scenario, both groups would escalate their radical activities with the change of administrations in New Delhi. Finally, India would continue to face intermittent attacks. Given this prospect, Routray concluded that it was important for the government to be adequately prepared to face future challenges.

Salafi-Jihadism in Indonesia: Ideology, the Claim for Youthfulness and the Quest for Identity

Noorhaidi Hasan approached the concept of identity politics from an anthropological perspective. He argued that violence was part and parcel of identity politics and that it was a rational response by marginalised individuals or groups who did not possess avenues for political expressions in the public sphere vis-à-vis the hegemonic power and the majority.

Hasan went on to look at Salafism, a discourse derived from the *Salaf al-Salih*, the pious Muslim forefathers who were regarded to have lived exemplary lives. Salafism at present entailed a return to the unadulterated understanding and practice of Islam according to the Quran and prophetic traditions. Hasan argued that the discourse had become a medium used by some Muslims to negotiate between Islam and modernity. Historical trajectories and political dynamics had further transformed the original definition of the term, and three categories of Salafism could be discerned at present: (i) the Islamist, (ii) the apolitical quietist, and (iii) the jihadist. Such a transformation was a function of the structural condition of the state, geostrategic factors including the economic political positions of Muslim countries, political context and individual agency.

Drawing from the Indonesian context, Hasan said the problems of transparency and accountability arising from widespread corruption, economic stagnation and bureaucratic incompetence in the country had caused the alienation of many. A high percentage of unemployed youths keen to rectify societal problems further compounded the issue. A resulting crisis of identity would make them easy targets for jihadist operators who fed off the youths' sense of 'homelessness'.

Hasan believed that Salafism was an attractive discourse, particularly because of its utopian nature and conviction that Islam was superior to other man-made worldly systems. The glorification of the golden future of Islam made it appealing to youths who dreamed of upward mobility and empowerment. Being involved in violent activities arguably offered youths a privileged arena to act upon their notions of heroism as well as identity. Hasan concluded that the idea of jihad was appealing to youths because it served as an identity marker to acquire social status and reputation. It was also a symbolic instrument to transform marginality into centrality and frustration into heroism.

DISCUSSION

A participant highlighted the disparity of treatment experienced by Muslims in India in terms of education, employment and other economic and political participation. He argued that these were the main reasons leading to extremism and radicalism among Muslims there. In response, the speakers remarked that extremism had existed there for a long time. They also argued that there were ample opportunities open to all religious groups but that various grievances were manipulated by extremist elites to legitimise their radical activities.

Another participant enquired about the current state of inter-communal relations in India. Routray responded that it was improving especially with increased political participation of the Muslims despite sporadic outbreaks of communal raids. To a question raised on the role of Islamism in resisting repressive regimes in developing countries, Hasan argued that Salafism was able to reframe resistance in Muslim countries but he was also concerned that democracy might concurrently challenge and weaken the Islamist agenda.

A participant observed an increasing Salafi indoctrination in Spain led by a particular Saudi Wahabi cleric and he wondered if Indonesia had seen a similar occurrence within its borders. Hasan affirmed the participant's observation, but added that post-911 debates actually saw more tolerant, friendlier and better contextualised discourses among the Salafists worldwide. He also urged European countries to include Muslims, including the Salafists, in the democratic processes of the mainstream national polity in order to avoid extremism and radicalisation.

PANEL 4

MANAGING EXTREMISM AND EXTREMIST THREAT TRENDS: IDENTIFYING BEST PRACTICES

Countering the Narrative of the Extremist

Thomas Koruth Samuel argued that radical thought played an important role in cases of terrorism. It was therefore important to find ways to counter them. He said traditional counter-terrorist strategies emphasised the detection of groups and their destruction, but that often left the wider population neglected as an important audience in counterterrorism efforts.

Samuel explained that the narrative of the radicals was based on six myths:

1 "Violence is the only way"
2. "We are doing it for the people"
3. "We have no choice"
4. "We are representing the oppressed"
5. "Our recruits are committed to the cause and victory will be ours"
6. "Our enemy knows only the language of violence"

In order to counter the radicals' narrative, Samuel suggested dispelling these myths by engaging the youths. While acknowledging the youth's indignation towards what they perceived (or conditioned into thinking) as injustices in this world, there was a need to inject debate on the ways to mediate such injustices. To deconstruct the myths, one could discuss the inefficacy of violent movements to achieve concrete political goals

as compared to the successes of peaceful movements. Arguments based on empirical analysis of history might be more effective in convincing the youths to renounce violent action and champion non-violent movements instead. One needed to combat the appeal of radical violent movements by showing impressionable youths that violence imposed huge cost on affected societies, did not benefit the oppressed and turned victims into aggressors. Perhaps even more importantly, rather than prescribing what was right or wrong, the youths should arrive at their own conclusions based on the empirical evidence that should be made readily available and effectively presented.

Samuel also argued that equally important to the deconstruction of the myths of justified violence, was showing the youths the ways to get involved in legitimate civil society work and publicising their engagement in such work. Samuel believed that youths *per se* were not the problem; they were part of the solution to countering radical thought.

Managing Extremism in Bangladesh: Prospects and Challenges

Shafqat Munir talked about the challenges of managing extremism in Bangladesh given that the country faced a number of other challenges as well, including overpopulation, underdevelopment, and environmental degradation. Munir argued that individuals did not turn extreme just because of the appeal of the ideology. A local environment characterised by lack of opportunities and confrontational and divisive politics also contributed to the spread of extremism.

Two major terrorist organisations and approximately 15 extremist groups operated in Bangladesh. One highly active extremist group was *Hizbut Tahrir*. The group had tried to radicalise urban youths in tertiary institutions in Dhaka and in other cities, especially over the internet. Their narrative was highly nationalistic and focused on the long-standing India-Bangladesh conflict, and it claimed that the Caliphate system from Islam's golden period was the remedy to Bangladesh's poor governance. *Hizbut Tahrir* was proscribed in 2009. Munir said that the official decision demonstrated that while traditional government efforts to fight terrorist groups was important, extremist groups were a concern and needed to be targeted as well. Many of the individuals involved in extremist groups were well-educated young men who set up websites and spread the ideology over the internet.

Munir suggested a number of key steps to counter the spread of radical thought. Among them were outreach programmes to the youths, public awareness campaigns, engaging religious clerics, and a rehabilitation programme. Nonetheless, the Bangladeshi government would still need to overcome a number of internal challenges to counter the problem of extremism. Besides a lack of a clear strategic approach and strategic communication, the government needed to implement good governance measures to reduce corruption and deliver better services.

BNPT Policies and Strategies in Dealing with Terrorism and Radicalism in Indonesia

Sri Yunanto spoke at length about Indonesia's *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT, or the National Counter-Terrorism Body) approach to dealing with

terrorism and radicalism in the country. Founded in 2010 and reporting directly to the Indonesian President, BNPT's mandate was to formulate national counterterrorism strategies and to coordinate institutions, implement policies and act as the crisis centre in case of an attack. At the apex of the organisation sat a head and three deputies who each led the three divisions within the BNPT. Group 1 concerned itself with the prevention of terrorism, protection and de-radicalisation. Group 2 handled security measures, law enforcement and the development of counterterrorism forces, and Group 3 oversaw international cooperation in preventing terrorism.

Group 1, to which Yunanto was attached, would conduct both open activities and closed intelligence operations. Its objective was to raise public awareness to prevent terrorism. This was to be achieved through the coordination of government agencies at the regional level. Additionally, Group 1 would analyse the extremist ideology and devise counter-narratives to radical ideology whilst promoting the benefits of peace. The approach utilised insights drawn from religion, psychology, law, sociology and culture, and the division's main targets were former prisoners, communities that were exposed to radical ideologies as well as individuals and groups that supported violent acts. For this objective, Group 1 formulated curricula, trained personnel and formed partnerships with moderate clerics and leaders. The division also mapped out radical and terrorist groups and their supporters who might stage attacks in the country. It was also part of a joint task force with other counterterrorism agencies that reviewed the security systems of airports and harbours with the objective of improving standard operation procedures.

However, the BNPT faced as many internal challenges in executing their mission as they did from external dynamics. These included organisational housekeeping issues such as filling up vacant positions with suitable staff as well as upgrading office facilities. The BNPT's dependence on other existing ministries as well as on the general public as collaborators hampered its efficacy in combating radical thought, especially when some within the constituents identified counterterrorism work as a fight against Islam.

Indonesian Jihadism and the Disengagement Initiative Effort

Taufik Andrie presented the various programmes which his Jakarta-based outfit, *Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian* (YPP, or the Institute for International Peace Building), had in place to disengage extremist militants from violence.

He first identified the three different ways in which those in the *jihadi* community could manifest and organise themselves. For one, there was the formally organised band of *jihadi* who were members of *Jemaah Islamiyah, Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid* and other similar groups. Then there were the 'freelance' jihadi who would collaborate with various groups simultaneously with no solid associations. Splinter groups and smaller cells made up the other form of organisation, and Andrie believed that such *jihadi* tended to be more militant and more dangerous compared to the rest who existed within relatively bounded structures. Andrie argued that advocating Islamism was an overarching form of political identity across the three groupings.

When dealing with such individuals, it was important for the YPP to understand the worldview of the extremists because it would prove crucial towards devising counter-narratives to their ideology. Besides capacity-building programmes in prisons, rehabilitation programmes for ex-terrorist prisoners, film road shows in cooperation with local communities and journalist trainings, the YPP would also conduct academic research to support its practical engagements. Andrie explained that the YPP's activities were focused on prisons and prisoners because detention facilities had increasingly become breeding grounds for radicalisation. One of the major challenges facing

prison facilities was the dire lack of prison wardens and personnel with sufficient training to identify radicalising elements in prisons. Most were under-qualified and did not understand the radical ideology or the causes of terrorism.

Andrie made a number of suggestions to tackle the problem of radicalisation in society. Firstly, more moderate voices of Islam needed to be heard and promoted in prisons as well as in the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and mosques. Andrie also favoured the use of non-religious, humanitarian approaches in the de-radicalisation of prisoners and former prisoners. Andrie concluded by asserting that it was important to note the great diversity among the extremist groups and the individuals within, but those from the splinter cells and those who constantly switched alliances remained of particular concern to Indonesian security.

Transnational Counterterrorism Approaches

In his presentation on transnational counterterrorism approaches, **Mohamed Feisal bin Mohamed Hassan** addressed three issues: the current challenges in counterterrorism efforts, approaches in rehabilitation, and the importance of winning the hearts and minds of the wider public.

Mohamed argued that the most pressing challenge many governments faced was the resilience of terrorist groups. Their persistence was largely due to the attractiveness of al-Qaedaism, strong family ties among members as well as a deep sense of injustice and repression. Among the disturbing recent upward trends Mohamed highlighted were self-radicalisation and radicalisation in prisons.

Mohammed went on to showcase de-radicalisation approaches in three countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Yemen. Saudi Arabia's approach was characterised by prevention, rehabilitation and after-care, with a focus on interaction with non-Muslims, the refutation of al-Qaeda's ideology and explanation of concepts like *jihad* and *takfir.*

Similarly in Singapore, the methodology of the Religious Rehabilitation Group consisted of extrication of the ideology, negation of misunderstandings, replacement of the ideology, and input of a rightful understanding of Islamic theology. The group consisted of religious scholars and teachers who provided religious counselling to detained members of *Jemaah Islamiyah* and their families. The group also worked to steer the wider Singaporean Muslim community against extremism through public education by deconstructing *Jemaah Islamiyah's* misinterpretation and misuse of concepts like *baiah* (allegiance), *jihad* (to strive) and *daulah Islamiyah* (Islamic state).

Lastly, Yemen's deradicalisation efforts revolved around dialogues regarding the teachings of the Quran and prophetic traditions with the terrorist detainees and engaging them in debates on the permissibility on killing non-Muslims. In all cases, Mohammed argued that winning the hearts and minds were evident and such an approach needed to be calculated into all levels of counterterrorism from prevention, operations, to rehabilitation and reintegration.

Mohamed pointed out that counterterrorism also faced wider challenges, including dwindling political willingness. He said it was also difficult to systematically identify who and which groups in society were proper representatives of the faith as well as develop ways to unite disparate communities. A long-lasting endeavour remained minimising sympathy and support for violent groups. Mohammed concluded by stating that rehabilitation and deradicalisation were long-term processes and that all segments of the community needed to be engaged in the battle against extremism and radicalism.

DISCUSSION

A participant pointed out that concepts like *baiah* and *jihad* were not invented by the Islamists but were Islamic concepts that went back to the time of Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, not all *pesantren* (boarding schools) produced radicals so closing them down was not a solution; in some parts of Southeast Asia, those schools were in fact the only opportunity for education.

Samuel received two questions. The first was on the issue of de-radicalisation: how could one persuade youths to come to the proper conclusions regarding stances on radical activities? The second question was whether there was a clash between Samuel's efforts and Malaysia's official stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Samuel replied that effective de-radicalisation meant having to "walk the talk", i.e., one would need to act upon the ideas that were discussed with the youths. When it came to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Samuel argued that there was no contradiction between the official Malaysian stance on the issue and his outfit's efforts to counter radical ideology. He believed it was important to openly discuss political injustices with the youths.

Another participant asked how the panel assessed the threat stemming from *Hizbut Tahrir*. Munir responded that the organisation was a concern in Bangladesh because not only did it not condemn terrorist actions or plans such as the bomb threat against foreign embassies in 2009, but it also tried to incite people against the government.

REGIONAL COMPARISONS:
COMMONALITIES, DIFFERENCES AND GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE

Julie Cohen gave a comparative assessment of the three workshops held thus far in the Global Futures Forum series on the study of radicalisation and violent extremism. The first workshop was held earlier in the year in April in Monterey, California, the second in June in Madrid, and the latest instalment in Singapore.

Cohen began by pointing out the dissimilar foci of discussions on how identity politics affected political behaviours at the three workshops. She recognised that the differences were, on one hand, a function of collaborations with different kinds of local institutions, but on the other hand, they were telling of the different natures of identity politics in the different regions. At the Monterey workshop where participants explored the issue of violent extremism in the Americas, the focus was on the individual; the discussions had largely gravitated around individuals' movements towards violence and the rise of home-grown extremists in the context of contemporary terrorism. In Madrid, where workshop participants addressed the issue of violent extremism in Europe, the focus was on the social; the central concern was the impact of religious extremism on the social fabric of society. In Singapore, where participants looked at how political identities could have impacts on violent

extremism in South and Southeast Asia, the focus was on the political; the debates that took place during the workshop underscored the varied political conditions of the different countries. She said it was helpful to take into account such differences when thinking about approaches to deal with violent extremism in the respective regions.

Another matter of divergence among the three regions was the manner and extent to which alternative outlets for the expressions of unique community grievances that had the potential to lead to violent extremism existed. Cohen noted that the US barely had alternative outlets for the expressions of, for instance, unique Muslim grievances. Yet there seemed to be an emerging arena to accommodate such voices in Europe while there were already established religious political parties and alternative groups in the South and Southeast Asian regions. An understanding of how such outlets impacted upon either identity politics or political extremism should be further developed. Additionally, Cohen commented that the lack of focus on al Qaeda at the Madrid and Singapore workshops perhaps meant that the US should think more about a post-al Qaeda world and what its interests were in such a setting.

Despite such differentiations, similar discussions did take place across the regions. The roles of the internet and political entrepreneurs and enablers as well as diasporas-related issues were constant features at the three workshops.

As conclusion, Cohen looked at gaps in existing knowledge and highlighted six areas that could benefit with more in-depth examinations. First of all, there was a need for a better grasp of the differences between the violent and the non-violent parts of an extremist movement; it was necessary to move beyond mere acknowledgement and anecdotal evidences of the differences, and to start empirically understanding the causality. Second, it was also necessary to understand the competing factors between extremist movements that were focused on a global agenda and those that were focused on a local agenda in order to fully appreciate how identity politics fed into one or the other. Third, there should be greater critical examination of the role of the internet as a diffuser of extremist and violent activities, not just as a facilitator. Fourth, it was necessary to have analytical clarity when it came to counter-radicalisation efforts because in simply taking one approach over others, the initiatives would be greatly limited. Fifth, there was a need to better understand the role of, and the many pathways stemming from, political Islam as an alternative to clandestine extremist activities and political violence as well as its implications for the wider political system of a country. Lastly, Cohen asked the participants to look over the horizon and imagine the next phase of a 'global jihad' which could likely be more fragmented.

WORKSHOP AGENDA

Sunday, 23rd October 2011

1700 – 1800	**Arrival of Invited Foreign Participants and Speakers** Venue: Marina Mandarin Hotel
1830 – 2000	**Welcome dinner (by invitation only)** Venue: Peach Blossom (Level 5) Marina Mandarin Hotel Attire: Casual (short-sleeved shirt/polo t-shirt)

Monday, 24th October 2011

0800 – 0840	**Registration** Venue: Vanda Ballroom Foyer (Level 5)
0840 – 0850	**RSIS Corporate Video** Venue: Vanda Ballroom (Level 5) Attire: Smart Casual (Long-sleeve shirt without tie)
0850 – 0900	**Welcome and administrative remarks** Speaker: **Assoc. Prof. Bilveer Singh**, Acting Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS, NTU
0900 – 0910	**Introduction to the Global Futures Forum** Speaker: **Ms Patricia H. M. Morrissey**, U.S. Representative to the Global Futures Forum, Office of Outreach, U.S. Department of State/Bureau of Intelligence and Research
0910 – 0930	**Introductory Address Workshop Series Findings: A Snapshot** Speaker: **Mr David Belt**, National Intelligence University, Washington DC, Global Futures Forum (Radicalization and Counterterrorism Community Leader)
0930 – 1010	**Framework address: Identity Politics and Violent Religious Fundamentalism** Speaker: **Assoc. Prof. Kumar Ramakrishna**, Head of CENS, RSIS
1010 – 1030	**Tea Break** Venue: Vanda Ballroom Foyer (Level 5)
1030 – 1200	**Panel 1: Strategic trends in political extremism in South and Southeast Asia, their conditions of emergence and the role of identity politics** Chairperson: **Dr Norman Vasu**, Deputy Head of CENS, RSIS Panelists: **Maj Gen (ret.) Muniruzzaman**, Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies *"Identity Politics: The Pathway to Growing Extremism"*

Prof. Greg Barton,
Monash University
"Southeast Asia's Long-Term Challenge: Countering Violent Extremism through Social Engagement and Identification"

Dr Muhadi Sugiono,
Gadjah Mada University
"Islamism and Politics in Indonesia"

1200 – 1300 **Lunch**
Venue: Pisces & Aquarius Room (Level 1)

1300 – 1440 **Panel 2: The nexus of identity politics and violent extremism in South and Southeast Asia: Case studies I**

Chairperson:
Assoc. Prof. Bilveer Singh,
Acting Head of CENS, RSIS

Panelists :
Prof. Rommel C. Banlaoi,
Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research
"Bangsamoroism and the Nexus of Identity Politics and Violent Extremism in the Southern Philippines"

Assoc. Prof. Greg Fealy,
Australian National University
"Exploring the Nexus between Islamist Identity Politics in Indonesia and Jihadism: The Cases of Jemaah Islamiyah, Laskar Jihad and Hizbut Tahrir"

Dr Farish Noor,
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies
"Cadre Training as a Means of Preventive Radicalisation? A Study of the PKS Islamist Party in Indonesia"

Mr Don Pathan,
independent security analyst
"New Generation, Old Grievances: Insurgency in Southern Thailand"

1440 – 1545 **Breakout session**

Group 1&2: Vanda Ballroom (Level 5)
Group 3: Vanda 3 (Level 6)
Group 4: Vanda 4 (Level 6)

1545 – 1600 **Tea Break**
Venue: Vanda Ballroom Foyer (Level 5)

1600 – 1715 **Group presentations and plenary discussion**

Venue: Vanda Ballroom (Level 5)

1715 – 1800 **Adjourn**

1800 – 2100 **Dinner address: The Nexus of Identity Politics and Extremism: The Global Context and Future Implications**

Speaker:
Mr David Belt,
National Intelligence University, Washington DC, Global Futures Forum (Radicalisation and Counterterrorism Community Leader)

Venue: AquaMarine (Level 4)

Tuesday, 25th October 2011

0845 – 0900 **Key findings from Day 1**

Venue: Vanda Ballroom (Level 5)
Attire: Smart Casual
(Long-sleeve shirt without tie)

0900 – 1030 **Panel 3: The nexus of identity politics and violent extremism in South and Southeast Asia: Case studies II**

Chairperson:
Assoc. Prof. Shyam Tekwani,
Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu

Panelists :
Mr Kishalay Bhattacharjee,
Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
"Identity, Victimhood and Violence"

Dr Bibhu Prasad Routray,
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies
"Competing Religious Extremist Movements in India: The Indian Mujahideen and the Hindu Terror"

Dr Noorhaidi Hasan,
Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University of Yogyakarta
"Salafi-Jihadism in Indonesia: Ideology, the Claim of Youthfulness and the Quest for Identity"

1030 – 1045 **Tea break**
Venue: Vanda Ballroom Foyer (Level 5)

1045 – 1245 **Panel 4: Managing extremism and extremist threat trends: Identifying best practices**

Chairperson:
Dr Muhadi Sugiono,
Gadjah Mada University

Panelists:
Mr Thomas Samuel,
Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia
"Countering the Narrative of the Extremist"

Mr Shafqat Munir,
STET Homeland Security Services
"Managing Extremism in Bangladesh: Prospects and Challenges"

Dr Sri Yunanto,
National Counter Terrorism Agency
"BNPT Policies and Strategies in Dealing with Terrorism and Radicalism in Indonesia"

Mr Taufik Andrie,
Institute for International Peace Building
"Indonesian Jihadism and the Disengagement Initiative Effort"

Mr Mohamed Feisal bin Mohamed Hassan,
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies
"Transnational Counter-Terrorism Approaches"

1245 – 1345 **Lunch**
Leo Ballroom (Level 1)

1345 – 1500 **Breakout session**

Group 1&2: Vanda Ballroom (Level 5)
Group 3: Vanda 3 (Level 6)
Group 4: Vanda 4 (Level 6)

1500 – 1515 **Tea Break**
Venue: Vanda Ballroom Foyer (Level 5)

1515 – 1630 **Group presentations and plenary discussion**

Venue: Vanda Ballroom Foyer (Level 5)

1630 – 1700 **Regional Comparisons: Commonalities, differences and gaps in knowledge**

Speaker:
Ms Julie Cohen,
US National Intelligence Council

1700 – 1715 **Closing remarks**

ABOUT GFF

WHAT IS THE GFF?

The **Global Futures Forum (GFF)** is a multinational community initiated in 2005 that works at the unclassified level to make sense of emerging and future transnational and global security challenges. Its primary goal is to foster the development of enhanced insight and foresight among its membership through the exchange of diverse perspectives and through the utilisation of collaborative analytic tools.

WHO IS THE GFF?

GFF seeks to involve a diverse population of governmental and private sector subject matter experts to stimulate cross-cultural and interdisciplinary thinking and to challenge prevailing assumptions. Membership in the GFF is limited to governmental intelligence organisations and other governmental organisations focused on foreign, internal, or international security issues. All such organisations regularly seek to monitor, understand, and forecast threats to national and international security as either their main line of work or as an ancillary function to policy formation or operations. GFF participants include analysts from intelligence, diplomatic, defence, and homeland security agencies, along with counterparts from academia, non-government organisations, and industry. More than 1,500 officials and experts from over 50 countries have taken part in GFF activities to date.

Argentina	**EUROPOL****	**Lithuania**	**Slovakia**
Australia*	**Finland***	**Luxemburg**	**South Africa**
Austria*	**France***	**Malaysia**	**South Korea**
Bangladesh	**Germany**	**Mexico**	**Spain**
Belgium*	**Greece**	**New Zealand**	**Sweden***
Brazil	**Hungary***	**Norway**	**Switzerland***
Brunei	**India**	**Panama**	**The Netherlands***
Bulgaria	**Indonesia**	**Philippines**	**Trinidad & Tobago***
Cambodia	**Ireland**	**Poland***	**Turkey**
Canada*	**Israel**	**Portugal***	**United Arab Emirates**
Chile	**Italy***	**Romania***	**United Kingdom***
Czech Republic*	**Japan***	**Singapore***	**United States***
Denmark*	**Jordan**		**Vietnam**
Estonia	**Latvia***		

*** Member Countries**

**** Observer**

HOW DOES THE GFF WORK?

General meetings: Washington, November 2005; Prague, December 2006; Vancouver, April 2008, and Singapore, September 2010.

Community of Interest (COI) workshops - small topic-based meetings held regularly in various member countries.

GFF operates a password-protected website that serves as the repository of reports from GFF workshops. It also includes hundreds of readings and resources on relevant topics, member blogs, discussion forums, and wikis: www.globalfuturesforum.org.

WHAT ARE THE GFF COIS? THE SEVEN (7) COIS FOCUS RESPECTIVELY ON:

- Emerging and Disruptive Technologies	- Proliferation
- Human and Natural resource Security	- Radicalisation and Counter-terrorism
- Illicit Trafficking	- Strategic Foresight and Warning
- Practice and Organisation of Intelligence	

ABOUT CENS

The Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) is a research unit of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Established on 1 April 2006, CENS is devoted to rigorous policy-relevant analysis of a range of national security issues. The CENS team is multinational in composition, comprising both Singaporean and foreign analysts who are specialists in various aspects of national and homeland security affairs.

WHY CENS?

In August 2004 the Strategic Framework for National Security outlined the key structures, security measures and capability development programmes that would help Singapore deal with transnational terrorism in the near and long term.

However, strategising national security policies requires greater research and understanding of the evolving security landscape. This is why CENS was established to increase the intellectual capital invested in strategising national security. To this end, CENS works closely with not just other RSIS research programmes, but also national security agencies such as the National Security Coordination Secretariat within the Prime Minister's Office.

WHAT RESEARCH DOES CENS DO?

CENS aspires to be an international research leader in the multi-disciplinary study of the concept of resilience in all its aspects, and in the policy-relevant application of such research in order to promote security within and beyond Singapore.

To this end, CENS conducts research in three main domains:

Radicalisation Studies

- *The multi-disciplinary study of the indicators and causes of violent radicalisation, the promotion of community immunity to extremist ideas and best practices in individual rehabilitation. The assumption being that neutralising violent radicalism presupposes individual and community resilience.*

Social Resilience

- *The systematic study of the sources of – and ways of promoting – the capacity of globalised, multicultural societies to hold together in the face of systematic shocks such as diseases and terrorist strikes.*

Homeland Defence

- *A broad domain encompassing risk management and communication; and the study of best practices in societal engagement, dialogue and strategic communication in crises. The underlying theme is psychological resilience, as both a response and antidote to, societal stress and perceptions of vulnerability.*

HOW DOES CENS HELP INFLUENCE NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY?

Through policy-oriented analytical commentaries and other research output directed at the national security policy community in Singapore and beyond, CENS staff members promote greater awareness of emerging threats as well as global best practices in responding to those threats. In addition, CENS organises courses, seminars and workshops for local and foreign national security officials to facilitate networking and exposure to leading-edge thinking on the prevention of, and response to, national and homeland security threats.

HOW DOES CENS HELP RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES?

To educate the wider public, CENS staff members regularly author articles in a number of security and intelligence-related publications, as well as write op-ed analyses in leading newspapers. Radio and television interviews have allowed CENS staff to participate in and shape the public debate on critical issues such as radicalisation and counter-terrorism, multiculturalism and social resilience, as well as risk management and mitigation.

HOW DOES CENS KEEP ABREAST OF CUTTING EDGE NATIONAL SECURITY RESEARCH?

The lean organisational structure of CENS permits a constant and regular influx of Visiting Fellows of international calibre through the Distinguished CENS Visitors Programme. This enables CENS to keep abreast of cutting edge global trends in national security research.

FOR MORE ON CENS

Log on to **http://www.rsis.edu.sg** and follow the link to "Centre of Excellence for National Security".

ABOUT NSCS

The **National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS)** (NSCS) was set up in the Prime Minister's Office in July 2004 to facilitate national security policy coordination from a Whole-Of-Government perspective. NSCS reports to the Prime Minister through the Coordinating Minister for National Security (CMNS). The current CMNS is Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Mr. Teo Chee Hean.

NSCS is headed by the Permanent Secretary (National Security and Intelligence Coordination). The current PS (NSIC) is Mr. Benny Lim, who is concurrently the Permanent Secretary for National Development and the Prime Minister's Office.

NSCS comprises two constituent agencies: the National Security Coordination Centre and the Joint Counter Terrorism Centre. Each centre is headed by a director.

The Secretariat performs three vital roles in Singapore's national security: national security planning, policy coordination, and anticipating strategic threats. As the coordinating body for national security planning and policy coordination, NSCS ensures that government agencies complement each other, and do not duplicate or perform competing tasks. It also organises and manages national security programmes, one example being the Asia-Pacific Programme for National Security Officers, and funds experimental, research or start-up projects that contribute to our national security.

For more information about NSCS, visit **http://www.nscs.gov.sg/**

ABOUT RSIS

The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** was officially inaugurated on 1 January 2007. Before that, it was known as the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), which was established ten years earlier on 30 July 1996. Like its predecessor, RSIS was established as an autonomous entity within the Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The School exists to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of Asia Pacific security studies and international affairs. Its three core functions are research, graduate teaching and networking activities in the Asia Pacific region. It produces cutting-edge security related research in Asia Pacific Security, Conflict and Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Area Studies.

The School's activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia Pacific and their implications for Singapore.

For more information about RSIS, please visit **http://www.rsis.edu.sg/**

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