# Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism

This issue of CTTA observes three critical case studies of political violence and terrorism that highlight either countering terrorism or preventing violent extremism (PVE) policies as the key takeaways. Research has highlighted that improved and innovative counter-terrorism and PVE policies can mitigate the long-term effects of terrorism and extremism, and possibly prevent conflicts from occurring in the first place. Through the case study of the Philippines, this issue discusses identity-driven conflicts and the need for 'hearts and minds' driven approaches by the state for conflict resolution. In order to ensure long-term peace, the state should look into culturally-sensitive approaches that don't alienate aggrieved groups and instead attempt to mainstream and integrate them into the broader society. Further, the issue delves into the influence and ideology of radical ideologues in the case of the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. The article highlights a national counter-narrative campaign can play a role in decreasing and countering the reverence and following of religious figures preaching intolerance and extremism. Lastly, the issue observes intelligence failures in terrorist attacks and recommends an improvement in related counter-terrorism policies through increased focus on cognitive analysis. This would allow states and related security agencies to respond better to emerging terrorist threats and prevent violent attacks from occurring.

In the first article, **Anushka D. Kapahi** and **Gabrielle Tañada** analyse the interplay of history, religion and identity to explain the Bangsamoro people's uprising in Mindanao, Southern Philippines. The authors argue that despite legal advancements, the Bangsamoro people's demand for autonomy and self-governance still exists due to a lack of recognition of their cultural identity. This has obstructed conflict resolution, attempts at assimilation and overall development within the region, necessitating a culturally-sensitive approach that gives due consideration to locals' identity for long-term peace.

**Farhan Zahid** sheds light on the impact of influential Pakistani militant ideologue Mufti Nizam-ud-Din Shamzai's worldview — in the form of fatwas, speeches, sermons and books — on various militant groups in the Af-Pak region. Shamzai is a celebrated scholar among Af-Pak militants and they continue to draw inspiration from his writings and teachings even after his assassination in 2004. However, Shamzai's personality and works remain under-researched. The author recommends that formulating a national counter narrative against violent extremism while understanding the impact of his ideology on Af-Pak militant discourse is essential for policymakers in Pakistan.

In the last article, **Shane Britten** reviews the importance of cognitive analytical techniques for accurate intelligence analysis in counter-terrorism. He contends that lack of training in the art of cognitive analysis has been a major factor in various counter-terrorism intelligence failures in recent years. These intelligence failures are not of information-collection, but reflect the inability to adequately analyse the collected information. The author suggests that by improving the cognitive capabilities of intelligence analysts involved in counter-terrorism through training and capacity building, the percentage of intelligence failures could be minimised.

# The Bangsamoro Identity Struggle and the Bangsamoro Basic Law as the Path to Peace

### Anushka D. Kapahi and Gabrielle Tañada

*Historically, the Muslim majority Mindanao in the Philippines has possessed a distinct history, culture, identity and religion. This has led to a sense of separation from the rest of the Philippines and has further developed their ardent desire for an autonomous region for self-governance. Despite legal advancements, barriers that obstruct the passage of laws to grant self-governance to the Bangsamoro people still exist.*

## Introduction

For more than half a century, the Philippines has faced a Muslim uprising in the southernmost region of Mindanao. The majority of the Muslim population in the Philippines resides in Mindanao.[1] The Muslims in Mindanao, called the Bangsamoro, have formed separatist movements that have waged armed struggles against the Philippine Government to assert their cultural identity and achieve self-rule. Recently, the Philippine Government has been working towards the realisation of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), which would provide the Bangsamoro people with some degree of freedom and autonomy.

Addressing the lack of recognition towards the cultural identity and religion of the Bangsamoro people, the BBL is the most notable approach taken by the Philippine government to resolve the Mindanao conflict. However, there are barriers that hinder solutions to the conflict and overall development in the region.

In this article, the approaches taken thus far would be laid out and its resulting socio-cultural, economic and political impediments would also be examined. The historical development of the Moro struggle would first be detailed, followed by an identification of the differences between the Moro people and other Filipinos and finally, concluding with some analysis on the BBL and the status of the Moro people in the Philippines. The complex heterogeneity of the Moro population and how it affects the realisation of peace in the Mindanao region would also be discussed, while adopting the perspective that the underlying question of identity is the root of the Moro issue.

## On the Term Bangsamoro

The word "Moro" is a Spanish term referring to the Muslim people of Mixed Arab and Barber descent from Northwest Africa, known as the Moors, who invaded and occupied Spain in the eighth century.[2] When the Spaniards colonized the islands of the Philippines in the sixteenth century, the term 'Moro' was first used for the Islamised natives in Manila in the 1570s, due to the observed commonalities between the Islamised natives and the Moors, the Spaniards' former colonial masters. Later in 1578, it was applied to the Muslim inhabitants of the Southern region of Mindanao and Sulu, as the majority in the Philippines converted to the Christian faith.[3] Although a percentage of the Moro people still do not accept the term to describe the people from the Bangsamoro region, it is now a well-established term.[4]

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[1] Jack Miller, "Religion in the Philippines," *Asia Society*, https://asiasociety.org/education/religion-philippines

[2] Jainal D. Rasul and Al-Gazel Rasul, *Still Chasing the Rainbow: Selected Writings of Jainal D. Rasul, Sr. on Filipino Muslim Politics, History, and the Law (Shariah)*, (Quezon City: FedPil Pub, 1998), 14.

[3] Cesar Adib Majul, *The Contemporary Muslim Movement in the Philippines*, (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1985).

[4] Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication, *Glossary of Terms*, http://www.muslimmindanao.ph/glossary_terms.html (accessed June, 05, 2018)

The term "Bangsamoro" translates to "Moro Nation," which includes all of the Filipino-Muslim ethno linguistic groups in Mindanao.[5] There are at least sixteen Moro ethnolinguistic groups in Mindanao which generally hail from the Malay race, and among which the four largest are: the Tausug, the Samal, the Magindanaon and the Maranao.[6] The Bangsamoro territory comprises provinces under the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and includes the four provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.[7] The term Bangsamoro was recognised under the 1976 Tripoli Peace Agreement between the Philippine Government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the most significant Bangsamoro insurgent movement in Mindanao at that time.[8]

## Bangsamoro Collective Identity: Ethnicity, Religion and Customs

Collective identity refers to a shared distinction amongst a group of people or community, which comes from the community's culture, beliefs and aspirations. Charles Taylor maintains that it is the cultural collective identity of a community that provides the moral and social frameworks that people use to determine who they are, how they see others and how they act.[9] The concept of Bangsamoro implies that the Moros have distinct characteristics which bind them together in a collective identity. Thus, the Bangsamoro collective identity originates from the shared ethnicity, religion, customs and historical experience of the Bangsamoro people.

Jainal D. Rasul asserts that the Bangsamoro collective identity "is more than religion, more than blood… it is both religion and blood."[10] According to Rasul, the concept of Bangsamoro that encompasses all the Moro ethnolinguistic groups in Mindanao is:

"...united by common religious faith (Islam), the Arabic alphabet and the Shari'ah or Islamic law... they are all proud of their glorious history, zealous of their hopes, dreams, and aspirations as a people, and assertive of their politico-religious rights and liberties."[11]

## A Shared Historical Experience

The collective identity of the Bangsamoro mainly developed separately from the Filipinos, due to the shared historical experience of the Bangsamoro people in their continued resistance against foreign invaders, including the Spaniards, Americans and the Philippine Government. Despite their distinct ethnic divisions in the past, the continued resistance against foreign invaders brought the Bangsamoro people together and they stayed united against their enemies, holding common aspirations.[12]

When the Spaniards arrived and settled in the Philippines in 1565, they found the archipelago to be divided into several sovereign city-states. Over the following years, the Spaniards incorporated the Filipino city-states under Spanish rule either voluntarily or by force. While they were largely successful in the northern and central regions, the Southern islands occupied by rebellious Muslim communities withstood the colonisers.

The Spaniards were ruthless in repressing groups they labeled as "Moro", killing swathes of families and burning villages. Despite occupying the Philippines for three hundred years, the Spaniards were never able to successfully conquer all of Mindanao or quash the Bangsamoro resistance. The shared experience and continued opposition of the Bangsamoro people towards their Spanish colonisers formed a sense of unity among them and led to the development of the Bangsamoro collective identity. The

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[5] Thomas M. McKenna, "Appreciating Islam in the Muslim Philippines: Authority, Experience and Identity In Cotabato," in *Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia,* eds. Robert W.Hefner and Patricia Horvatich (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 55.
[6] Rasul and Rasul, *Still Chasing the Rainbow,* 14.
[7] Rosalita Tolibas-Nunez, *Roots of Conflict: Muslims, Christians and the Mindanao Struggle*, (Makati City: Asian Institute of Management, 1997), 4.

[8] Ibid.,7.
[9] Sasja Tempelman, *Constructions of Cultural Identity: Multiculturalism and Exclusion*, (Massachusetts: Political Studies Association and Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 19-20.
[10] Rasul and Rasul, *Still Chasing the Rainbow*, 35.
[11] Ibid., 15-16.
[12] McKenna, *Islam in an Era of Nation-States*, 38.

Bangsamoro collective identity was further solidified during the American occupation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

When Spanish and American colonisers employed Christian Filipino soldiers to fight against the Bangsamoro people in Mindanao, the latter began to perceive Christian Filipinos from the north as foreign invaders who were no different from the Spanish and Americans colonisers. As T.J.S. George explained, a boundary was then established between the Christian Filipinos from the north and the Bangsamoro people and both began to see themselves as different from each other.

Eventually, the refusal of Filipinos to accept the Moros in the nation-building process resulted in a separate national consciousness among the Moros. This separated form of national identity was further consolidated after the post-colonial period and resulted in a separatist uprising in 1972.[13]

## The Bangsamoro People's Road to War with the Philippine Government

From 1946 until 1960, the Bangsamoro people became part of the Philippine Republic and there was peace in Mindanao. However, peace was temporary as tensions soon resurged between Christian Filipinos and the Bangsamoros.[14]

For an extended period, the Philippine Government did not recognise Islamic laws in the Philippines, even in Mindanao. This alienated the Bangsamoro people who believe that Islamic Law, intrinsic to their way of life, should be recognised and implemented. Moreover, the Filipino education programme in public schools never provided any deference for, recognition of or accommodation towards Filipino Muslims. Public schools made it obligatory for the Bangsamoro children to learn Christian scriptures and textbooks, adopted examples that were offensive to Filipino Muslims. [15] Additionally, the Philippine Government did very little to promote socio-economic development in the Morolandia. In contrast to Filipino Christian communities in Mindanao, the Muslim population was relatively impoverished. Finally, during the 1950s, the Philippine Government encouraged Christian families and ex-communist rebels to settle in Mindanao and gave them land titles over Bangsamoro lands which the Government did not own. Thus, many Bangsamoro families suddenly found themselves being unjustly expelled from their lands and properties. Resentment and distrust grew among the Bangsamoro people as the Philippine Government persisted in taking hostile actions against them.

In the late 1960s, tensions mounted between the Filipino Christian settlers in Mindanao and the Bangsamoro people. Distrustful of each other, both Filipinos and Bangsamoros began forming militias to protect their communities, leading to clashes between them.[16]

In 1972, Moro revolutionary and politician Nur Misuari founded the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). It aimed for a fully independent Bangsamoro state for all the Bangsamoro people in Mindanao through armed struggle. In its 1974 Manifesto, it characterises the Bangsamoro people as one nation based on a shared homeland and religion who lived under oppression by the central Philippine Government.

Throughout the 1970s, the MNLF and the Philippine Government were engaged in fierce conflict. Many parts of Mindanao, including major cities, fell to the MNLF.[17]

In 1977, one of the MNLF leaders, Hashim Salamat broke away from the MNLF and established a splinter group. It named itself the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in 1984. Just like the MNLF, the MILF sought a fully independent Bangsamoro state in Mindanao through armed revolution. In contrast to the secular orientation of the MNLF, the MILF adopted a more Islamic direction and formulated a policy of creating an Islamic society in the Bangsamoro regions. To accomplish this, the MILF applied Islamic law in the areas under its control and believed that the creation of an independent Moro state would follow.

[13] Ibid., 44.
[14] T.J.S George, *Revolt in Mindanao*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), 89.
[15] Ibid., 91.
[16] George, *Revolt in Mindanao*, 1-2.
[17] Ibid., 216.

## Peace Talks

In 1996, the MNLF and the Philippine Government signed the *Final Peace Agreement*, which officially ended the MNLF's fight against the government and created the autonomous region of Muslim Mindanao. The Final Peace Agreement designated a *Special Zone of Peace and Development (SZOPAD)* in Mindanao, for development and investment efforts to be focused. The agreement sets out the new governance structures of the autonomous Muslim region and, more importantly, it outlined the integration of MNLF members into the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

However, The MILF strongly denounced the 1996 Final Peace Agreement and continued advocating for full Bangsamoro independence through continued fighting against the Philippine Government. As a result, the MILF and the Philippine Government were engaged in heavy fighting during the late 1990s to the 2000s. In 2000, then-President Joseph Estrada declared an all-out war against the MILF. In response to Estrada's offensive, the MILF likewise engaged in a "holy war" or jihad against the Philippine Government.

When Benigno Aquino III was elected as President in 2010, peace negotiations between the Philippine Government and the MILF resumed, while the MNLF was sidelined. Showing signs of compromise, the MILF opted for regional autonomy after dropping its demand for full independence. Over the next few years, the MILF and the Philippine Government signed agreements that aimed at establishing peace in Mindanao. These include the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (2012) and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (2014). The latter provided for the drafting of a Bangsamoro Basic Law, which would establish the Bangsamoro government in Mindanao if passed into law and ratified in a plebiscite within the core territory. This would entail more extensive self-rule for the Bangsamoro people than that of the ARMM.

On July 27 2015, the Philippine Congress began deliberations on the BBL for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BAR). If ratified, this law would officially abolish the ARMM and provide for a transition to a Bangsamoro Government, which would likely be led by MILF members. In 2016, the newly-elected President Rodrigo Duterte announced his intention to prioritise the enactment of the BBL into law.[18] The BBL is currently being deliberated by the Philippine Congress.

## On the Bangsamoro Basic Law

In early 2015, a clash between the MILF and the Philippines Special Armed Forces occurred and trust between the two parties was eroded. Perceptions changed for the worse and in the following days, both sides engaged in a media warfare that blamed each other. While both sides attempted to ease tensions and pass the BBL, the peace process was ultimately derailed. This was due to the unconstitutionality of the land transfers outlined in its provisions and the change in administration.[19]

Had the BBL passed into law, a Bangsamoro government would have been established in Mindanao to replace the ARMM. If a majority of the voters in Bangsamoro agreed to the enactment of the BBL, the ARMM would have effectively been abolished and replaced with the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA). The BTA lays out the Bangsamoro government structure according to the BBL's provisions and the Bangsamoro people would have been able to elect their own officials. Furthermore, Mindanao would in turn have benefitted from strengthened trust and security between the region and the Philippine Government, encouraging greater economic activity and development.[20]

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[18] "President Duterte's 1st State of the Nation Address," *Rappler*, July 26, 2016, https://www.rappler.com/nation/140860-rodrigo-duterte-speech-sona-2016-philippines-full-text

[19] "Why BBL Did Not Pass Congress," *Luwaran.com,* February 08, 2016, http://www.luwaran.net/home/index.php/editorial/24-

january-8-15-2016/546-why-bbl-did-not-pass-congress

[20] "Potential Impacts of the Creation of Bangsamoro on Mindanao Regions," *The National Economic and Development Authority*, June 09, 2015, http://www.neda.gov.ph/2015/06/04/potential-impacts-creation-bangsamoro-mindanao-regions/

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## Analysis: Barriers to Reconciliation

The effect of the historical conflict on the Bangsomoro collective identity and its impact, or lack thereof, has resulted in numerous barriers that continue to impede reconciliation between the Bangsamoro people and the Philippine government.

### *Socio-Cultural Barriers*

Studies by Hilario Gomez in 1970 explained that the rejection by Christians of the Muslims on a socio-cultural religious level contributed to the erosion of trust between the two religious groups.[21] Most of the public and private discourse in the Philippines on the Mindanao conflict have framed it as an Islamic problem, with interfaith dialogues and conferences covering *"Muslim issues,"* and terms such as the *"Mindanao problem"* or the *"Moro problem"* were popular in describing the economic status of the people in the Southern Philippines*.*[22]

Although a portion of the Bangsamoro people still refuse to use the term 'Moro', it has now been widely recognised by the inhabitants of the Muslim majority Mindanao. Both 'Filipino' and 'Moro' have strong linkages to the history of the Philippines, and both cultures have now taken ownership and a sense of pride in using their corresponding terms. Nur Misuari clarifies that they are not a part of the majority Filipino society with a slogan "Moro not Filipino". Rather, "Moros are Muslims" in their struggle for autonomy or independence against the Catholic majority Philippine central government.[23] One of the factors that hinders the sharing of national identity between the Muslims and Filipinos is the hesitance of the Moros to be referred to as 'Filipinos.' Historically, the long-fought conflict has prevented the Moros from having an emotional tie to the rest of the Philippines.

### *Economic Barriers*

Common to the American colonisation period and the Martial Law era was the systematic disenfranchisement and the suppression of socio-economic development of the Bangsamoro people. In 1903, the Philippine Commission adopted Act No 718, which invalidated land grants from Moro sultans, datus or chiefs of non-Christian tribes when they were made without the approval of the government.[24] Additionally, it was during the Marcos administration that foreign nationals, companies, miners and loggers were given franchises to exploit the resource-laden Mindanao.

This exploitation and marginalisation was exposed in the 1971 report of the Senate Committee on National Minorities, which revealed that there was no single irrigation project in any municipality in the Muslim majority region of Mindanao at the time. The benign neglect by the national government of the welfare and rights of the Moro people became entrenched in the status quo, so much so that by the time the ARMM was created, it merely drowned in the weight of its legacy of poverty and violence. [25]

As a result, the 2007 mid-term progress report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Philippines highlighted how "socioeconomic development in the Philippines was uneven and poverty was characterised by wide disparities across regions and population groups."

In 2015, it was reported by the Philippine Statistics Authority that four out of five of the poorest populations in the Philippines were located in Mindanao. ARMM in 1991 had 11.3 percent of its population living below the food threshold. In 2015, that number increased to above 39 percent. [26] Although Mindanao is one of the most resource-laden regions of the

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[21] Hilario Gomez, Christian Approach to Filipino Muslims, *Church and Community 10, no.4 (1970)*: 13-26

[22] Jainal Rasul, *Muslim-Christian Relations at the Grassroots Level*, (Dansalan Quarterly, 1984).

[23] Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

[24] "Republic Act No. 718," *Philippine Laws, Statutes and Codes,*

http://laws.chanrobles.com/republicacts/8_republicac ts.php?id=722

[25] Fermin Adriano and Thomas Parks, "The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance, The Case of Mindanao, Philippines," *The Asia Foundation*, https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/MindanaoC aseStudyFullReport.pdf (Accessed April 25, 2018)

[26] "Statistical Tables on 2015 Family Income and Expenditure Survey," *Philippine Statistics Authority*, December 22, 2016,

https://psa.gov.ph/content/statistical-tables-2015-

Philippines, the Moro people have unfortunately been unable to benefit from these natural riches.

### *Political Barriers*

With varying outlooks on the role of religion in governance, enduring constructed biases and the hesitation of the Moros in identifying themselves as 'Filipinos,' the Moros have been unable to participate in the creation and implementation of laws. However, their political participation is crucial for them to realise their interests and goals. Yet due to their marginalisation, the socio-economic gap between Christians and Muslim Filipinos still persists.

While the BBL approach is currently being pursued, there has been criticism that the BBL infringes upon the territorial integrity of the Philippine Government. The BBL states that the regions covered are to be under the political entity called the Bangsamoro, which may lead to the conclusion that it grants the Bangsamoro external self-determination. However, this would violate the Philippine Constitution as the Bangsamoro should not be considered a separate political entity, and remain merely as an autonomous region.

Ultimately, despite the hindrances to the passage of the BBL, this framework still represents the greatest opportunity presented to the Bangsamoro people to achieve autonomy in determining issues related to managing resources, education and formulation of policies efficiently.[27]

### Conclusion

Given a chance to work, the BBL symbolises the willingness of all Filipinos, including Christian Filipinos and the Bangsamoro people, to resolve the conflict in Mindanao and to come together to address the issues and concerns of the Bangsamoro people. It is an act of coming together of the Bangsamoro people and Christian Filipinos to unite in Philippine nation-building and in charting a common path in the shared hope of living together in peace and prosperity.

Should the wording of the BBL be amended to ensure an alignment with the Philippine Constitution, it would be an effective approach in resolving the conflict in Mindanao as it would give the Bangsamoro people a measure of self-rule with a collective identity, history, religion, culture and customs. It could also potentially address issues that led to rebellion by the Bangsamoro people against the Philippine Government in the 1960s due to the non-accommodation of their cultural identity, religion and neglect of their socio-economic needs. It would present the Bangsamoro people the opportunity for self-rule, a cause that they have been fighting for throughout the centuries. By showing that the recognition and accommodation of the Bangsamoro people would be possible within the framework of the Philippine Republic, they would be a part of the Philippine nation-building process. In his first State of the Nation Address, incumbent President Rodrigo Duterte stated that:

> *"We will vigorously address the grievances that have been time and again expressed, not only by the Bangsamoro, indigenous peoples and other groups for security, development, fair access to decision-making and acceptance of identities… We express our willingness and readiness to go to the negotiating table… To our Muslim brothers, let us end the centuries of mistrust and warfare."*[28]

Culture, especially for the Moro people, is very much integrated in their formulation and implementation of policies and laws. Without taking this into account, it is highly probable that any approach would be ineffective at best and aggravating at worst. In terms of countering terrorism, the root causes seem to always be the same. A perceived lack of recognition and consideration, and the ensuing segregation into an "us" and "them"

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family-income-and-expenditure-survey (Accessed June 17, 2018)

[27] Antonio G. M. La Viña, "An Analysis of the 2017 BBL Draft: The Good Provisions," *MindaNews*, August 08, 2017, http://www.mindanews.com/mindaviews/2017/08/rive

rmans-vista-an-analysis-of-the-2017-bbl-draft-the-good-provisions/ (Accessed June 05, 2018).

[28] "President Duterte's 1st State of the Nation Address," *Rappler*, July 26, 2016, https://www.rappler.com/nation/140860-rodrigo-duterte-speech-sona-2016-philippines-full-text

situation is not unique to the Bangsamoro situation. The BBL and the push for an autonomous state within the same country display a sense of cordial reintegration.

Unjust conflict and historical grievances has led to the build-up of hatred and prejudices between both parties. This has also caused wide-scale poverty for the inhabitants of Mindanao. Government neglect of socio-economic development has led to the underdevelopment of the region, whereas political disenfranchisement has led to a lack of representation in the Philippine government. The Bangsamoro conflict had resulted from unfair socio-cultural, economic and political frameworks, which were deeply rooted under the rubric of identity and caused marginalisation. However, through dialogue, recognition, and legitimisation, conciliation between the Philippine government and the Moro people could be achieved. To do so, trust between both parties would be a pre-requisite. With a harmonious relationship, both the Muslim-Filipino and Christian-Filipino communities would be able to harvest the benefits of a transformed unequal power structure, one that is free from prejudice, ignorance and hate.

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# Deconstructing Thoughts and Worldviews of Militant Ideologue Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai

## Farhan Zahid

*Few militant ideologues in Pakistan have managed to attain a reverence as high as Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai. His ideology and thoughts influenced and produced a number of terrorist and extremist organisations. Until his assassination in 2004, he had issued fatwas, held messianic and anti-Semitic views, glorified Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. All this made him prominent among terrorists and extremists when few had talked about these issues. Most importantly, he remained an undisputed ideologue among local, regional and global terrorists and extremists. It is thus important to comprehend his ideology in order to understand the dynamics of the Islamist extremist movement in Pakistan.*

## Introduction

Islamist political parties of Deobandi Islam, a sub-sect of the Hanafist school of thought, constitute the largest Islamist vote bank in Pakistan. The Deobandi parties such as Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) and its different factions adhere to Deobandi doctrine and cultivate political and ideological support on a sectarian basis. In contrast to the pan-Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), the JUI appears to have far more deep-rooted relations with militant groups in Pakistan as the leaders of JUI have been regularly invited to mediate between the government and militant groups. Deobandi Islamist parties have considerable influence over a number of militant groups like Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami (HuJI), Harkatul Mujahedeen (HuM), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Jaish-e-Mohmmad (JeM), and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The political support base for Deobandi parties emanates from a network of Deobandi madrassas across Pakistan. The most important of these madrassas is Jamia Uloom-ul Islamia, located in Binori Town in the southern port city of Karachi. Apart from its influence over Islamist terrorist groups, the JUI leadership has been never been involved in any terrorist incidents. On the contrary, its leaders have been targeted in a number of terrorist attacks.

With the exception of a few (Salafi) organisations in Pakistan, most militant organisations are Deobandi. It appears that their leaders and present ideologues derived their understanding of terrorist and extremist worldviews from the thoughts and ideology of a veteran ideologue like Shamzai. Shamzai's influence could be gauged from the very fact that the minority Deobandi-sect (10-15 per cent in Pakistan) has continued to exert its influence in Pakistan. Hence it is imperative to comprehend and analyse Shamzai's thoughts for a better understanding of Islamist militancy and to know the contours of the terrorist and extremist network in Pakistan with its links with regional and global jihad movements.

## Background

JUI was founded by a Pashtun Deobandi scholar Yousaf Jan Banori in the 1950s.[1] This seminary is considered to be firmly associated with militancy in Afghanistan and Pakistan as it has produced various extremist ideologues and militants, and has also given birth to Kashmir-centric militant groups, such as HuJI, HuM, and JeM. JUI is also highly sectarian in its outlook with its perennial anti-Shia rhetoric. It has been instrumental in developing relationships between extremist sectarian groups like Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and its militant wing Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Kashmiri militant groups like JeM and HuJI.

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[1] "Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism", *International Crisis Group*, Asia Report N 130, March 29, 2007, p.7

Nizamuddin Shamzai[2], a teacher at the seminary, who later became principal, gained prominence because of his influence on militant groups in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. He was also considered to be the principle ideologue of the Afghan Taliban as well as the mentor of Mullah Mohammad Umar, the founder of the Taliban movement. Staunchly anti-Shia, Shamzai promoted sectarianism until his assassination in 2004 in Karachi. Shamzai was also a member of JUI's central Shura, though he never actively participated in politics.[3]

Shamzai, a Pashtun from the Swat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was born in 1951.[4] After his early education at a local madrassa in Swat, Shamzai moved to Lahore to study at Jamia Ashrafia (another known bastion of Deobandi Islam in Pakistan) and later studied at Jamia Farooqia, Karachi. Shamzai did his doctorate at the University of Sindh after General Zia ul Haq's military regime termed all madrassa degrees equivalent to Masters Degrees in Pakistan. Before Shamzai's death, it was customary for leaders of Deobandi militant groups to seek his blessing before launching their groups, especially for militancy in Afghanistan or Indian Administered Jammu and Kashmir.[5]

## Thoughts and Ideology

Until his assassination in 2004, Shamzai was the most influential Deobandi scholar in Pakistan among the militant groups and Deobandi political parties. He openly and unapologetically professed terrorist and extremist ideologies and supported Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and the need for violent jihad all over the world.

Broadly, his ideological outlook can be divided into four segments:
• On Jihad
• Anti-Semitism
• On Taliban and Al-Qaeda
• Fatwas (Religious Edicts)

## On Violent Jihad

At the core of Shamzai's ideology was jihad. He wrote, delivered speeches, issued fatwas and lectured his audience across Pakistan. In one of his lectures he said that violent jihad was the only solution for numerous problems confronting the Muslim world. This was not only to defeat the tyrants but also to impose the laws of God. For Shamzai, praying five times a day, fasting during Ramadan (Muslim holy fasting month), paying alms money, and the pilgrimage did not constitute "Kul-e-Bandigi" (devout following of Islam) until Muslims considered violent jihad to be their responsibility[6]. The Kul-e- Bandigi concept emphasises the "Kasur" that is the mistake committed by Muslims (*ummah*) by not participating in violent jihad in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Chechnya, Burma and elsewhere. According to Shamzai, Islam is all about justice (Adl) and since the Ummah has failed to fulfil its responsibilities, it is therefore weak, defeated, humiliated, and enslaved.

Shamzai believed that the Taghut (non-Muslim Imperialists) are joyous while seeing Muslims in such a state of affairs. He was convinced that Taghuti forces are only afraid of jihad in Islam and they are doing their best to keep Muslims away from their age-old jihadi traditions.[7]

In 2000, while speaking up about the importance of violent jihad he said, "It is because of our efforts (madrassa and the Ulema) that we have propagated violent jihad in Pakistan and now today all of these violent jihadi organisations (Tanzimat) are flourishing because of our patronage, and jihadi voices are being heard in every mosque in Pakistan."*[8]*

Concerning violent jihad, another focus of Shamzai was the religious authority of the *ulemas* to declare and set the time of jihad. He often regarded the proclamation of violent jihad as one of the sole prerogatives of the

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[2] "Mufti Shamzai — A Profile", *Daily Times*, May 31, 2004,http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_31-5-2004_pg7_24

[3] "Sectarianism Strikes at The Top", *Daily Times*, May 31, 2004

[4] Matta is a subdivision in district Swat which is also known stronghold of Islamist militancy. Hailing from Matta, Fazalullah was the declared public enemy in Pakistan and was also the leader of Tehreel-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

[5] Amir Rana, "Mufti Shamzai Was Warned By The Tribal Militants", *Daily Times*, June 09, 2004, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_9-6-2004_pg7_26

[6] Maulana Qutbuddin Abid, *Khutbaat-e-Shamzai (Volume 1)* (Karachi: Mufti Mehmood Academy Pakistan), 123.

[7] Ibid., 131

[8] Ibid., 132-133

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*Ulema*. He categorically refuted the sole authority of the ruler or the Emir to declare violent jihad."[9]

## Anti-Semitism

The growth of anti-Semitism in Pakistan can be attributed to Shamzai, who until his death, preached systematic anti-Semitism in his speeches and writings. These were weaved within conspiracy theories. Shamzai's anti-Semitism then paved the way for terrorists to massacre Jews at the Chabad House synagogue during the Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008. He considered Jews as the root cause of all ills in the Muslim world. Shamzai's anti-Semitism touched its zenith when he accused Pakistani newspapers of being agents of the Jewish media. He said, "Dawn the newspaper from Karachi, and others like the Frontier Post, The News International and other newspapers published in the country, are all part of Jewish media's conspiracy against Islam, jihad and madrassas."[10]

## On the Taliban

Shamzai was considered to be the spiritual father of the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban movements. He was known for promoting the Afghan Taliban regime, their religious practices, enforcement of Sharia laws, treatment of women and minorities and legtimised their actions through his fatwas. He acted like a (de-facto) spokesman of the Islamic Emirate (1996-2001) and delivered lectures all over Pakistan in support of the Taliban government. His profound influence over Deobandis and militant organisations inspired many Pakistanis to move to Afghanistan to fight alongside the Afghan Taliban against their bête noire, the former Northern Alliance group.

Before the advent of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Shamzai had remained a vocal supporter of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan (1979-89). [11] After the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, Shamzai extended his support to them and used his influence over

the militant organisations in Pakistan to provide human and material support to the Afghan Taliban regime. [12] When the US intervened in Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks, Shamzai issued a Fatwa against the US and declared jihad.[13] While addressing the "America Murdabad Rally" (Death to America Rally) in 2001, just two days before the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, he issued his Fatwa against the Americans which noted that violent jihad is obligatory for all Muslims. This required young able-bodied Muslim men to wage violent jihad against the US on behalf of Afghanistan and this required the killing of Americans, Jews, as well as attacking businesses and military installations.

## On Al-Qaeda

Mufti Shamzai had close relations with Al-Qaeda's former Chief, Osama Bin Laden. Apparently, he convinced Mullah Umar to reject the Americans' demand for the handing over of Osama bin Laden. His relations with Al-Qaeda could be measured from his Fatwa titled "*If Sheikh Osama is Captured or Harmed, Jihad will Become Obligatory Against all Governments Involved in the Operation*" in 1998 at the forum of Majlis-e-Taawun Islami Pakistan (Organisation for Islamic Cooperation), as Emir and founder of the organisation.

Shamzai was alleged to have managed relations between Mullah Umar and Osama Bin Laden as he mediated the latter's travel to Afghanistan from Sudan, and used his influence over the former. His relations with Bin Laden appeared to have developed during the heyday of Afghan jihad when he issued a fatwa against the Soviet Union in 1979 and later actively supported the recruitment of Islamic fighters from his madrassa in Karachi for the war in Afghanistan. Bin Laden joined the Afghan War in the early 1980s.[14] After Al-Qaeda bombed the US embassies in East Africa (Nairobi and Dar us Salam) in 1998, Shamzai issued the above-mentioned Fatwa in support of Al-Qaeda. He was also alleged to have facilitated the exit of Bin Laden and Mullah Umar from Afghanistan amid the fall of

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[9] Ibid., 144
[10] Ibid., 152
[11] "Life-Sketch of Shamzai", *Dawn*, May 31, 2004, http://www.dawn.com/news/360455/life-sketch-of-shamzai
[12] Ibid

[13] Ibid
[14] Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of Taliban/Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan 1979-2010*, (London: C Hurst and Co Publishers LTD, 2011),475.

the Taliban regime in November 2001 through his connections.

## Relations with Pakistani Militant Organisations

Shamzai exerted enormous influence on a plethora of militant groups in Pakistan. He was the chief patron of JeM and the JeM chief Maulana Masood Azhar was Shamzai's favorite student at Binori Town madrassa.[15] He also issued Fatwas in support of Harkatul Mujahedeen (HuM)[16], and leaders of Hurkat-ul Jihad Islami (HuJI) were his students. Shamzai used his relations with the Grand Mufti Bin Baz of Saudi Arabia to get funding from the Saudi religious affairs ministry.[17] The sectarian war between ultra-orthodox Deobandis and Shias began to take root in Pakistan as a result of the funding provided to anti-Shia extremist groups such as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and its parent organisation Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).

Shamzai could be seen as the father of the Deobandi militant movement. Under Shamzai's patronage, a plethora of Deobandi militant organisations sought ideological guidance. He reinvigorated militant Deobandism in Pakistan with a strong streak of sectarianism.

## Countering Shamzai's Narrative

Unlike Mufti Shamzai's radical views about religiously-motivated armed-struggle against the Pakistani state and its security institutions, the majority of mainstream religious scholars and Islamic institutions in Pakistan have opposite views. For instance, renowned Pakistani religious scholar Tahir-ul-Qadri has issued a voluminous fatwa against suicide terrorism terming it as un-Islamic. Similarly, a 2015 ruling of the Council of Islamic Ideology, an advisory panel of clerics that focuses on Islamic aspects of laws, declared that the state alone had the authority to declare jihad. Likewise, the government has implemented counter-narrative programs against terrorism. One of these programs launched in 2018 is the Paigham-e-Pakistan, which is a fatwa signed and endorsed by over 1,829 religious scholars that declares suicide terrorism and

violent acts in the name of Islam and jihad as unlawful.

## Conclusion

Shamzai was killed in 2004 in Karachi but his legacy remains to this day. His ideological influence over jihadi organisations in Pakistan and Afghanistan is unremitting. His ideological thoughts have paved the way for the birth of several militant organisations of various hues and colours, hitherto active in various conflict theaters of South Asia.

He was one of the few jihadi ideologues of South Asian origin that was able to develop a rapport with international terrorist organisations like Al-Qaeda. He was instrumental in galvanising anti-American protest movements in Pakistan after the 9/11 and later thousands of Pakistanis joined the Afghan Taliban following his Fatwa against the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in 2001.

Understanding his thoughts and ideologies is pivotal in comprehending the scope of jihadi movements in Pakistan and Afghanistan. His writings are still being read in the militant circles and it is critical for Pakistani policy makers to know the impact of his ideologies over the populace while endeavoring to formalise a national narrative to counter prevailing jihadi narratives in Pakistan.

Though he was killed in 2004 when the global jihad movement was still in its early stage, the impact of his ideology and worldview is so immense that his writings and speech recordings are still widely accessed. He is still revered as their undisputable mentor and ideologue. Terrorist organisations that started working with his blessings are still conducting terrorist operations.

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[15] Ibid
[16] "Sectarianism Strikes at The Top," May 31, 2004.
[17] Khaled Ahmed, "Al-Qaeda's Growing 'Counter-Writ," *The Friday Times* 22, no. 41. (2010)

http://www.thefridaytimes.com/26112010/page2.shtml

# Intelligence Failures Are Analytical Failures

## Shane Britten

*The success of mass casualty attacks by groups like Al-Qaeda and its regional offshoots, and more recently the so-called Islamic State (IS), suggests intelligence has failed us on a number of occasions. This paper reviews the processes and priorities of intelligence analysis and argues that it is a lack of insightful cognitive and analytical techniques performed by suitably trained and skilled analysts that may be the root cause of these failures.*

## Introduction

Almost all recognised counter-terrorism intelligence failures have been caused by a failure of analysis, not collection.[1] Both the 9/11 Commission Report and the intelligence report by the United States (US) Senate Select Committee on the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction show that while both failures occurred in very different and substantive domains with varying levels of analysis, the causes of failures are related, among other things, to errors of analytical judgement by individuals and groups in different parts of intelligence organisations.[2] This is a bitter truth, largely because governments spend millions, even billions, on collection methods. They range from satellites, mobile phone exploits and to microscopic listening devices. Although this should sound reassuring to the average citizen, a cursory review of significant terrorist incidents indicates that even though information was often held by the right agencies at the right time, world-altering events still occurred. Given this, there is a requirement for a change and re-investment in analytical capability.

While it may be tempting to attempt to resolve this issue in the same way as with intelligence collection problems – by investing in new systems and expensive infrastructure, the often-overlooked element of analytical success is the underlying skill of the analysts themselves. Analysis is a complex and difficult undertaking, where cognitive biases impact every judgement and decision. Information is constantly changing and constitutes varying degrees of accuracy, and in the counter-terrorism domain, the consequences of a mistake are catastrophic.

Add this to today's fast-moving world where around 269 billion emails are sent every 24 hours[3] and data is measured in petabytes and exabytes, it might seem attractive to rely on a computer-based solution to address the difficulties of analysis by human analysts, especially with the growing technological focus on artificial intelligence and machine-learning. In contrast, this paper will explore why developing the cognitive and mental skills of analysts plays a more critical role in differentiating whether intelligence is successful, or whether intelligence failures occur.

## Context

The global threat environment continues to increase in complexity. The mass casualty attacks favoured by Al-Qaeda under the leadership of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri have given rise to an increasing independence of motivation and planning. This trend started with Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi in Iraq, was propagated by clerics like Anwar al-Awlaki through publications like *Inspire* and has become the hallmark of IS. Together with use of the cyber environment for recruitment, radicalisation, training and increasingly the conduct of attacks, intelligence analysts are

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[1] Richards J. Heuer, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* (Washington DC: Center for The Study of Intelligence, 1999), 65-84

[2] Jeffrey R. Cooper, *Curing Analytic Pathologies: Pathways to Improved Intelligence Analysis*

(Washington DC: Centre of the Study of Intelligence, 2005).

[3] Statista, *Number Of Sent And Received E-Mails Per Day Worldwide From 2017 To 2022 (In Billions),* https://www.statista.com/statistics/456500/daily-number-of-e-mails-worldwide/

left with a rapidly evolving and diversifying threat landscape. An analyst regularly accesses streams of information most accurately described as 'firehoses' for their speed and volume.

It is long-held in our intelligence communities that an analyst needs to have a high Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and a high Emotional Quotient (EQ). The former is assumed to reflect high-level critical thinking, reasoning and logic whereas the latter relates to the ability of being able to understand, relate to and predict human behaviour. However, with the emergence of the cyber world, the increased use of independent and encrypted messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and the enormous volume of material and interactions on the Internet and social media platforms, it demands something different. We refer to it as Technical Quotient (TQ) – the ability to understand, embrace and not be fearful of modern technology, and the ability to use tools and software to harness the vast volume of online materials to pursue an intelligence advantage.

Unfortunately, our world has become so caught up in embracing technology and systems that cognitive capability and critical thinking is being left behind or replaced by a computer that does the thinking. A study by the Reuters Institute at the University of Oxford shows that among people aged 18-24 years old, 84% of them use online sources, including social media, as their main source of news.[4] This becomes a problem when it is not paired with the ability to critically assess the source and validity of the information that is fed to social media users by algorithms that are geared towards marketing and advertisement placement.

**The Intelligence Cycle**

With this changing landscape comes the demand for intelligence analysts to rapidly understand, assess and predict the behaviour of would-be terrorists whose motivation may range from religious extremism to a lack of social acceptance or mental illness. Given our increased presence online, accessing information has become easier than in the

past. However, the sheer volume and the mixed credibility of online materials indicates that it is time to turn some attention back to the IQ part of the equation that makes up a successful analyst.

**The Intelligence Cycle**
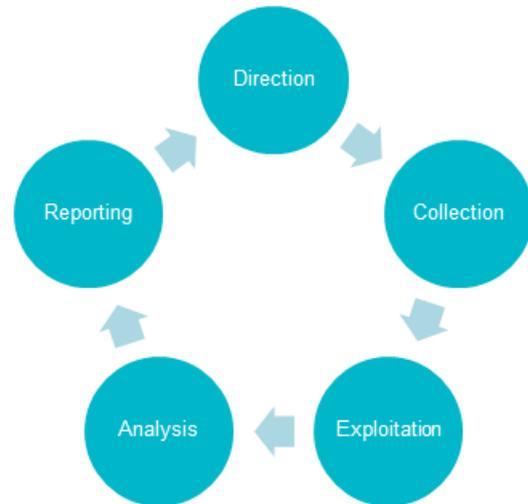


Figure 1: The Intelligence Cycle

The intelligence cycle, as illustrated in Figure 1, has been recognised for the better part of a century as a rudimentary depiction of the process used by those who seek to gain some insight into the future. After all, that is what counter-terrorism intelligence is – predicting and hopefully preventing future activities of those who would do us harm. The intelligence cycle shows us that following some initial direction, whether a broad political remit (i.e. ensuring the security of Australia) or a more specific command (securing Australia's borders from illegal entry), intelligence agencies enter a collection phase to gather information on the subject. This collection should be driven by requirements that have been carefully distilled and communicated, where a process of consideration of the direction tells us which questions are vital to answer in order to achieve the desired result.

These questions, which are alternatively called intelligence questions or information requirements, guide exactly what is collected to generally avoid privacy-invasive, expensive over-collection or being swamped with

[4] Nic Newman, Richard Fletcher, Antonis Kalogeropoulos, David Levy and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, "Reuters Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017," *Oxford University,*

https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20News%20Report%202017%20web_0.pdf

information. Ideally, information requirements help us avoid the collection of the wrong information and direct collectors with a clear motive and overall objective.

The collection phase is what has been made famous by Hollywood – covert human sources, telephone intercept, bugs, surveillance and the tools and techniques one can imagine. In real-life, these are generally slower and are more similar to gathering haystacks than skilfully picking out the needle.

Once information is collected, it must be sorted, collated and filtered. This allows volumes of data – think of our 269 billion emails per day – to be sifted, distilled and assessed for quality and relevance to the initial question. Much of the information collected might be interesting, but might not be fundamental in addressing our information requirements. Such information is then set aside or discarded, and relevant information that may provide some insight is prioritised.

The part which is usually left out by the movies, the analysis process, is the crux of the intelligence cycle, where information is considered, evaluated and assessed. Information becomes intelligence through the answering of one simple question – what does it mean? The effectiveness of this process determines whether a terrorist attack could be predicted in advance or not, the latter representing an intelligence failure. For example, this could mean the identification of a shift in an individual, as they gradually evolve from a fundamentalist to a violent extremist.

The objective is to structure all of the relevant information and assure the provision of valuable insight on the inner workings, capabilities and mechanisms of the target(s). A good analyst would then begin to consider logical methods of organising such findings to ensure information gaps are found and filled, that the content is accurate and well referenced while simultaneously preparing to disseminate and present gathered inferences to ultimately create actionable intelligence.

## Collection versus Analysis

There is no doubt that the process of information collection is vital. If an analytical team does not have the information that provides genuine insight, the process is doomed to fail from the start. Yet when so many resources are placed in the collection process without a proportionate investment in analysis, intelligence agencies create an 'information overload.' Simply put, the haystack is far too large to find the few needles that hide within; and adding more hay would not help.

Before the 9/11 attacks, then Deputy Director of Central Intelligence John McLaughlin noted that most of the work of the 30 to 40-member analytical team within the US Counter-Terrorism Centre dealt with collection issues[5].

Consider the scale of the modern Internet. In addition to 269 billion emails per day, there are 500 million tweets daily and 2.2 billion active Facebook users per month. This makes it easier to see that effective distillation of this volume of data is critical to ensure intelligence success. However, one fundamental truth remains: regardless of how much or how little information is collected, it would not be turned it into effective intelligence if the process of analysing that information is flawed.

The role-specific training that goes into individuals working in the collection area, whether within security agencies, military, law enforcement or the private sector should be considered. The training often includes interview training, questioning and elicitation, body language assessment, human source recruitment and management and many more. These are the specialised skills required for an individual to succeed in collecting information. Yet, many organisations around the world and particularly in the private sector, do not have the equivalent training and skills development for analytical roles. Often, this is a result of the expectation that individuals would have extant analysis capabilities, which are supposedly developed through tertiary education, prior work experience or somehow innate. However, generally speaking, this is not the case.

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[5] National Commission On Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission On Terrorist*

*Attacks Upon the United States* (Washington DC: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004), 339-353.

Analytical training is often also limited to teaching new analysts internal systems. For example, new analysts are taught how to request information, task collection or gather financial records, rather than developing the cognitive skills required to use large amounts of information of varying quality to make projections and predictive assessments. It is rare to see a developed analytical training package that comes with competency assessment, which measures the skills of the individuals in using structured reasoning and critical thinking to set aside, or become aware of the role of personal biases in their analysis.

**Software Analytics**

Historically, agencies around the world have attempted to solve this problem by investing in the same way that they have with collection efforts, albeit a smaller proportion of investment. This includes the purchasing of computer systems, software packages and case management systems. Some of these systems may cost many millions of dollars. Despite this investment, these same agencies have experienced well-published failures of analysis, and are unable to accurately predict future behaviours based on indicators that are grounded in much of the collected information.

Even the most sophisticated software package lacks 'Find Target Now' or 'Predict Behaviour' buttons. The problem with systems and programs is that they would never be able to break the single biggest problem of intelligence analysis, that is, human unpredictability. Terrorism targets are complex and lead multi-faceted lives. They often employ a range of counter-intelligence skills to hide, obfuscate or sneak under the radar. They change their plans, often for reasons that may seem arbitrary. They will become more or sometimes less radicalised based on a wide range of activities, experiences and interactions that cannot always be monitored.

Furthermore, terrorism targets will always be more creative than the analysts that are trying to stop them. Analysts are generally reason-based, logical thinkers, with high IQs and dedicated to success. Creativity is required to understand the target and question things that

have long been taken for granted. Intelligence analysts are expected to raise new questions that lead to the identification of previously unrecognised relationships or to possible outcomes that have not been previously foreseen.[6]

On the contrary, terrorists are creative, flexible and think deviously in a manner which is often not restrained by the ethical and moral framework that guides conventional thinking. While analysts often look for new perpetrators of the same methodology or technique, terrorists are constantly innovating and are always striving to find a gap to conduct a successful attack. Figure 2 illustrates the changing methodology that terrorists have adopted in conducting terrorist attacks since the 1990s.

Even the most advanced software cannot get ahead of that. If software is not the answer to the problem, then what is?



Figure 2: The Changing Methodology of Terrorist Attacks Since The 1990s

**A Changing Analytical Model**

For intelligence analysis to be successful, the old jigsaw model – that analysis is like putting together a large jigsaw puzzle to see the right picture – needs to be replaced. In fact, there is no single picture or outcome. A far better analogy is that intelligence analysis is more like a doctor or a general practitioner who is attempting to diagnose the list of symptoms being presented to them. There is not only one possibility, and their job is to critically examine the evidence to determine the '*most likely*' diagnosis. Or, if you want to be truly scientific, it would mean the reviewing of the evidence in order to eliminate possibilities that are

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[6] Richards J Heuer, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, 65-84.

deemed to be the most unlikely. As such, analysts need to create competing hypotheses, that when contested against each other, help to develop a holistic methodology for examination and deduction.

If agencies, corporations and individual analysts continue to try to 'put the jigsaw together', the implication and priority for them is that if they cannot see the complete picture, they are missing a piece. And the proceeding conclusion is that they need to collect more information. This flaw in analogy is a vital element of preparing future analysts for upcoming challenges. It is far more than a change in how an analytical role is described. Rather, it guides analysts-in-training on how to use their mental flexibility and creativity to minimise intelligence failures.

The idea that there is more than one answer serves two purposes. One, it forces an element of creativity in considering multiple intentions from the detected activity, and two, it removes one element of analytical bias behind the decision-making. Often, events are time-critical. Analysts will find themselves searching for quantitative amounts of information that they hope will secure and justify their analytical reasoning and judgement. Not only does this raise the spectre of confirmation bias, which is one of the most dangerous cognitive pitfalls in intelligence analysis, but it also increases the possibility of wasting time and intelligence resources which are increasingly limited.

## Forcing Creativity

What steps are then taken to consciously improve creativity and imagination? Often regarded as the father of creative thinking and one who was responsible for creating the term 'brainstorming', Alex Osborn wrote extensively on the need to develop the creative mind alongside the judicial or analytical mind. [7] This principle is well accepted within enforcement agencies around the world.

However, research shows that the human brain fails to generate creative ideas when put under stress. The natural work environment that counter-terrorism analysts operate in is

indeed stressful. Often limited by time, they usually manage more cases than they could handle in a normal workday. They also face high consequences of failure and function in a highly regimented hierarchy of responsibility and accountability. By extension, their capability to be creative is severely limited.

Although the conclusion that one can draw from this is rather straightforward, it has significant consequences. Security agencies need to change the work environment to encourage counter-terrorism analysts to think more creatively in order to be more effective at predicting the nature and extent of terrorist threats.

There is a range of useful tools for analysts to building their creative capability and insight. These include structured brainstorming, desktop and practical red cell exercises where analysts play the role of the adversary, and seek input from talented outsiders. Each of these tools requires the time and discipline to conduct them in a permissive and encouraging environment to enhance creative outputs.

## Removing Analytical Bias

Richards Heuer writes in detail about the tendency of intelligence analysts to perceive what they expect to perceive.[8] This relates to the natural inclination of individuals to integrate new information into existing frameworks or expectations. For example, an analyst may jump to conclusions in a case that shares similarities to an older case.

The paradigm that analysts are presented with- piecing the jigsaw puzzle together - supports this problem. The end result in this paradigm is a pre-determined picture that is identified when enough pieces are gathered together. Instead, the medical analogy presented earlier suggests that there is no one outcome, just an assessment of what is likely to happen based on the symptoms that are being presented.

As an example, if consideration is given to a suspect who carries multiple mobile telephones, engages in surveillance-detection techniques and obfuscates online activities

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[7] Alex Osborn, *Your Creative Power: How to Use Your Imagination* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1961). Chapter 1, Page 2

[8] Richards J Heuer, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, 7-16

via a VPN, it is simple to generate a range of potential reasons for that activity that may range from nefarious to innocuous. However, if this case is presented within the framework of a terrorism investigation, say for example, the suspect had expressed extremist views, it is likely an analyst will see those 'symptoms' as indications of terrorist attack planning and counter-intelligence.

As with creativity, there are a range of tools and analytical techniques to generate multiple hypotheses or possible outcomes, as well as assess information we hold against many options instead of just one. This includes tools such as Ishikawa analysis[9], the analysis of competing hypotheses[10], structured threat and risk assessment and many more.

## Analytical Tradecraft

For all of the reasons articulated above, intelligence analysis is an ongoing challenge. Nevertheless, it is possible to improve analytical outcomes through the investment of time and training in building the cognitive capabilities of those in analysis roles. There are a wide range of analytical tools and techniques that provide a structured framework that assist in minimising bias and enhancing positive outcomes.

It is vital to dedicate time, resources and effort to improve the cognitive process of analysts. This does not just apply to new recruits, as experience is only one factor in determining successful intelligence prediction. Analytical tools and mental techniques to challenge bias, mindsets, groupthink and perceptions should be provided to go beyond conventional thinking. The structural hierarchy that analysts exist in should be assessed on the basis on whether they are given enough opportunities to challenge the status quo, provide alternative ideas or hypotheses, even if it runs contrary to agency experience or leadership opinions. Creativity and reflection should be encouraged, and to quote Richards Heuer we should encourage our analysts and analytical managers to think about thinking. By studying how we go about examining a problem or situation, we can then identify if we are falling into a mental trap or whether we are failing to

consider all possibilities. Thinking about investigations is one thing, but the re-consideration of a mental approach to a case should become a requirement to avoid intelligence failures.

Only then would analysts move from working on a jigsaw puzzle to an approach that bears more similarities to the medical industry, where medical personnel who are armed with an array of tools and techniques at their disposal, reach into their bag to select the correct tool for the situation and possess the flexibility to change their approaches.

Training must not stop at the working level of analysts or investigators. Team leaders and managers need to be trained and given a range of robust and defensible tools to prioritise their workload. It should be based on sound principles that remove bias and provide a consistent framework for our decisions.

Analysts should be trained, upskilled and given the chance to reflect on their capability and processes at least twice per year. Vitally, this does not translate to being away from the workplace for a couple of weeks as it further stretches the already limited resources. Even a few hours of training, reflection, or exposure to new tools and techniques could have a substantial impact on increasing the effectiveness of an analyst or investigator. Even workplace mentoring and guidance that occurs a couple of times a year could drastically improve the effectiveness of a team. Training improves morale, ensures retention, enhances adaptive behaviours and breaks people away from the 'we have always done it this way' mantra, which is dangerous and tired.

Asking analysts to look over bucket-loads of information to predict the behaviour of some of the world's most unpredictable people tells us that intelligence analysis is indeed one of the toughest jobs in the world. The least we could do is to provide a variety of tools and techniques to assist and, more importantly, to see a solid return on investment on your system or software. This might be the easiest way to ensure that you are not handing out

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[9] This is often regarded to as the Fishbone Analysis, where the indicators and events are arranged against a predicted outcome to identify information gaps or a cause and effect relationship.

[10] This process includes the process where evidence is considered against a range of hypotheses in parallel.

jigsaw puzzles, or, worse, preparing to become the next intelligence failure.

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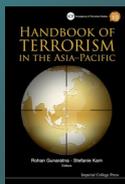
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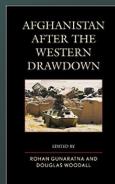
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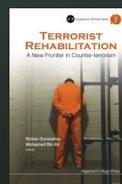
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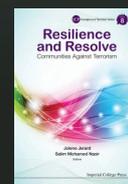
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Jolene Jerard and Salim Mohamed Nasir (Imperial College Press, 2015)
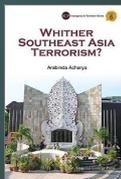
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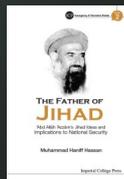
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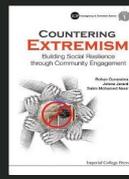
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## ICPVTR'S GLOBAL PATHFINDER

Global Pathfinder is a one-stop repository for information on current and emerging terrorist threats from the major terrorism affected regions of the world. It is an integrated database containing comprehensive profiles of terrorist groups, terrorist personalities, terrorist and counter-terrorist incidents as well as terrorist training camps. This includes profiles from emerging hubs of global terrorism affecting the security of the world, as well as the deadliest threat groups in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus. The database also contains analyses of significant terrorist attacks in the form of terrorist attack profiles. For further inquiries regarding subscription and access to Global Pathfinder, please contact Ng Suat Peng at isngsp@ntu.edu.sg.