

Al Qaeda's Network in Southeast Asia

by
Dr. Rohan Gunaratna

Rohan Gunaratna: Panelists, ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to focus on three areas. First, I'm going to look at the international context of terrorism and how it relates to Southeast Asia. Then I will look at the groups that are associated with al Qaeda in Southeast Asia and finally, I will discuss how we can reduce the threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia.

Let me very quickly look at how al Qaeda has evolved since U.S. intervention in Afghanistan in October of 2001. What has happened to al Qaeda in the past 24 months? Like a beehive being attacked in Afghanistan, we have seen al Qaeda, which had an estimated strength of 4,000 members dispersing from the core of Afghanistan and Pakistan into lawless zones of Asia, the heart of Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus. And with that we have seen that the al Qaeda organizers, financiers, operatives and other experts working together with groups that are tied together with the Taliban, armed, trained, financed in Afghanistan throughout the 1990s.

Afghanistan Became a Terrorist Disneyland

We all know that after the Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in February of 1989 the international community looked the other way. And as a result of the international neglect of Afghanistan, Afghanistan turned into what you call a terrorist Disneyland, where a number of terrorist

organizations, Islamist groups, primarily from Asia and the Middle East, moved their operational headquarters into Afghanistan, and they established a state-of-the-art training network in Afghanistan. Our estimate is that al Qaeda trained about 15 to 20,000 Islamists from around the world, but a total of 70,000 Muslim youth were trained in Afghanistan during that period.

Among the groups that sent members to train in Afghanistan, groups from Asia included the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Abu Sayyaf group, the Philippines, Laskar Jundula from Indonesia, Jemaah Islamiyah from Southeast Asia, Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia from Malaysia, Jamaat Salafia from Thailand and two groups from Myanmar: a group known as the Rohingya Solidarity Organization and a group called ARNO, the Arakan Rohingya National Organization, which later became Arakan Rohingya National Front.

Al Qaeda's Distinct Ideology

So, these are primarily the groups that received al Qaeda financing, al Qaeda training and most importantly, al Qaeda ideological indoctrination. Unlike the associated organizations that came into contact with al Qaeda, al Qaeda had a very distinct ideology. Al Qaeda's ideology was the ideology of global jihad, of universal jihad. That is, al Qaeda could target its enemies wherever they could be found.

Al Qaeda could do that because al Qaeda inherited a network known as the Afghan Service Bureau Network, a network that was created originally in Pakistan in 1984 by Abdullah Azzam, the Palestinian-Jordanian who also founded al Qaeda in March 1988. Abdullah Azzam, in the founding document of al Qaeda, very clearly states that al Qaeda is the vanguard of the Islamic movements and that is why we have seen that al Qaeda was very selective in its targeting.

Why did al Qaeda attack America's iconic targets? It was because al Qaeda had the mandate to go after the American's most outstanding landmarks. Because al Qaeda, by those attacks, wanted to inspire and instigate the wider Muslim community and also to show the way, more importantly to show the way to other Islamic movements, to other Islamist terrorist organizations, that even the United States can be attacked the same way the Afghan Service Bureau Network participated in the anti-Soviet Afghan mujahidin campaign and where they defeated the world's largest land army in Afghanistan throughout the 1990s.

Al Qaeda Has Gravely Suffered

Throughout the 1980s we have seen that al Qaeda's thinking and doctrine evolved in the 1990s to target the remaining superpower. And if you look at the success of the United States in its fight against al Qaeda, we have seen that in the past 24 months al Qaeda has gravely suffered; from its 4,000-member strength estimated in October of 2001, today's strength is under 1,000 members. Al Qaeda is no longer able to mount, coordinated, simultaneous large-scale attacks in the United States, in Western Europe or in Australia, in the Western countries.

It is because of three reasons. First, unprecedented intelligence and law enforcement cooperation. The second factor is human vigilance. That is, as long as there is a high state of public alertness, it is very difficult for a terrorist group to plan, prepare, and execute large-scale attacks. The third factor is that al Qaeda is being hunted. It is being aggressively hunted around the world. It is being aggressively hunted in the United States. Traditionally, the U.S. government did not hunt al Qaeda.

There are two doctrines of fighting terrorism. One is the fisherman doctrine. That is, you wait with the bait until the fish comes and attacks the bait. The second is the hunter model. That is, you go after these terrorists. The Americans transformed their doctrine from the fisherman model to the hunter model after 9/11. And until then, al Qaeda grew in strength and in size from March 1988, the date in which al Qaeda was created, until October of 2001.

With regard to Southeast Asia, what we are seeing is that several hundred Southeast Asians went to Afghanistan first during the Soviet period when the mujahidin were fighting the Soviet army in Afghanistan. And then, with the end of the Soviet period, what we are seeing is that the core of the Southeast Asian Islamist groups is staffed by those members who fought against the Soviets. Of course, the most notable figure was Isamuddin Riduan Hambali; the man who was the al Qaeda point man in Southeast Asia was also the operational leader of Jemaah Islamiyah. And similarly, we see core leaders of Southeast Asian groups coming from people who went from Southeast Asia and fought against the Soviets. But, we are seeing very clearly a second generation, and these are the people who went as members of Southeast Asian

groups, trained in Afghanistan, and came back.

Al Qaeda Had a Mandate to Establish Islamic States

Al Qaeda had a mandate, a mandate to establish Islamic states wherever Muslims lived. And in many ways this was also the mandate of Southeast Asian groups. Al Qaeda's most enduring contribution to Southeast Asian groups was to make the Southeast Asian groups fight not only their local jihad campaigns, but also to fight at the global level. To target the United States, to target the friends and the allies of the United States and in many ways, al Qaeda was able to infect the minds of these Southeast Asian groups that you should not only target the regimes that you're opposing, the regimes that you have been fighting for so long, but also to hunt the United States.

Osama bin Laden provided the ideal model. He said in one of his interviews, "The United States is the head of the poisonous snake. And in addition to fighting the false Islamic rulers and the corrupt Islamic regimes, it is important to target the distant enemy, which was the United States that was shielding these corrupt regimes and these false Muslim rulers." These are the words of al Qaeda and that was the decisive moment when al Qaeda decided to move from targeting countries such as Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, to targeting the U.S. interests in East Africa in August of '98, then the USS Cole in October of 2000 and then of course, 9/11.

What we are seeing is that of the Southeast Asian groups, JI or Jemaah Islamiyah, was the group that was the closest to al Qaeda. And in fact, the Jemaah Islamiyah Charter document, very clearly has passages that

have been directly taken out from the charter of al Qaeda that was written by Abdullah Azzam. The concept of the vanguard, al Qaeda as the pioneering vanguard – al Qaeda as the spearhead that led so many other global Islamic movements to fight the United States, its allies and its friends.

JI Expected to Lead Fight in SE Asia

The same concept is very much replicated in the charter where the Southeast Asian groups looked up to JI to lead the fight and that is why once again, JI – unlike other Southeast Asian groups, unlike other groups that fought local jihad campaigns – was very selective in their targeting. They always went for high-profile, symbolic and strategic targets. Instead of attacking 20, 30 targets a year, they were very selective and they went for 5 or 6 targets. Targets where they could make a significant impact and send a very powerful message, "We are present, we are continuing the campaign and we will continue to target under any means, irrespective of loss, irrespective of their members being arrested, their camps being dismantled."

In many ways, Jemaah Islamiyah was a group that was very close to al Qaeda, both ideologically and operationally. Ideologically because Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahri – the deputy leader of al Qaeda, the principal strategist of al Qaeda, and also the designated successor to Osama bin Laden – visited Southeast Asia; he was accompanied by Muhammad Atef, a man also known within the al Qaeda circles as Abu Hafsa, the man who was the military commander of Al Qaeda at the time of U.S. intervention, the man who was killed in a U.S. predator attack in November of 2001.

Both Zawahri and Muhammad Atef visited Indonesia, visited Aceh, visited Maluku, and also had extensive discussions with the leaders of that region. In many ways, their main interest was to galvanize these movements. For instance, they had discussions with the Free Aceh Movement, GAM, but GAM rejected the advances, GAM did not want to be a part of the al-Qaeda umbrella. And together with al-Qaeda, JI created an umbrella organization in Southeast Asia called Rabitatul Mujahidin, the legion of the Mujahidin. And in fact, Hambali and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir chaired these meetings. In many ways, Rabitatul Mujahidin was the Southeast Asian umbrella.

Al Qaeda's Global Umbrella

Al-Qaeda itself had a global umbrella. The name of the al-Qaeda global umbrella was the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders Organization created in February 1998. The reason the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders was created was because Osama bin Laden firmly believed in mobilizing the disparate Islamist organizations in the Middle East, in Asia, in Africa and in the Caucasus. He wanted to have a unified effort. Osama never aspired to be the leader of the jihad struggle. Osama always was in the background giving assistance and giving strategic and ideological direction. And that was the principal reason he was able to build that coalition.

In Southeast Asia, the Southeast Asian leaders also did the same. Hambali was al-Qaeda's point man, convened the Rabitatul Mujahidin meeting, which was partly participated by representatives from MILF and ASG in the Philippines, Laskar Jundullah from Indonesia, JI, and Jemaah Salafia. Also, JI leaders from Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines

participated in that meeting. Other than that, we saw representatives from the RSO and the ARNO from Myanmar, participating in that meeting.

We also expected a visit from a Southeast Asian group that is from Lashkar-e-Toeba, a Pakistani group fighting in Kashmir to participate, but this particular representative could not come. And subsequently, we learned that JI members had even visited Kashmir. For instance, a JI member had visited Pakistan and Kashmir and had discussions with the Lashkar-e-Toeba leaders in Azzad Kashmir and in Pakistan.

We have also seen that the complexion of the Southeast Asian Islamist groups have significantly changed as a result of al-Qaeda ideological and operational penetration of these groups. In Southeast Asia we have never witnessed a Mosque casualty attack. We have never witnessed a suicide attack. And we have never witnessed a Southeast Asian group wanting to hijack aviation and crash them onto high profile targets in Southeast Asia.

With al-Qaeda's penetration of Southeast Asia we saw Bali, which was very clearly a suicide attack. We saw the Jakarta Marriott attack, again a suicide attack, and we also saw the attack against Bali, which was a Mosque casualty attack. Again we saw Mas Selamat Kastari, the JI chief of Singapore, planning to hijack an airplane from the Bangkok International Airport and crash it to the Changi Airport in Singapore. Very much an al-Qaeda tactic, and this clearly demonstrates how these local organizations evolved, developing certain capabilities and certain intentions that we did not see prior to this foreign influence. And that was clearly the al-Qaeda influence, al-Qaeda's contribution to these groups.

If you very quickly survey the character of Southeast Asian groups and how they have changed, there are three distinct phases. The first phase was beginning with 1988 with the receipt of Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, the brother-in-law of Osama bin Laden. Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, who was in Peshawar, visited the Philippines and he became the first director, the founding director of the International Islamic Relief Organization in Manila, one of the largest and one of the wealthiest Saudi charities. And we saw money funneled through this organization, firstly to the MILF, and then to the Abu Sayyaf Group of Abdurajak Janjalani. And we saw significant contact between al Qaeda and both of these organizations. And in fact, it was a European security service that first monitored, starting from 1998, the communication between Osama bin Laden and his director of external operations, Abu Zubaida – who is now in U.S. custody – and the leadership of the MILF.

Specifically, the Hashim Salamat, the leader of the MILF, Yusof Alongan, the head of the MILF Finance Committee, and a man by the name of Mukhlis Yunos – who is now in Filipino custody – was the head of the MILF special operations group, a man who worked very closely with JI in a number of organizations, including one of the first operations mounted by JI in the Philippines which was in December 30th of 2000. Soon after JI bombed 30 churches in Indonesia, JI moved their operational members to Manila where they bombed five significant targets in Manila, and these targets were taken with the assistance of the MILF special operations group headed by Mukhlis Yunos.

JJ Infrastructure in the Philippines

Other than that, we have seen significant JJ infrastructure in the Philippines. We have seen that within the Abu Bakar complex, which is the main MILF military complex. We have seen three camps that are JJ-al Qaeda camps: Camp Palestine, Camp Hodeibia, and Camp Vietnam. The emir of Camp Vietnam, Omar Faruq, was subsequently arrested by the Indonesians and handed over to the Americans. And the confession, the debriefing of Omar Faruq, provides insights into how al Qaeda and JJ developed their capability, especially their capacity for training new recruits in those camps in the Southern Philippines. And we have seen that when some of those camps were attacked by the Filipino military in early 2000, we have seen a shift of those camps from the Philippines firstly, to Poso Sulawesi, and then to Kalimantan.

And since then we have seen that most of the camps – small, mobile camps, mostly in-side homes. They do not have big camps, with the exception of the camps that have been still run by the MILF in the Southern Philippines. We have also seen that the JJ's Southeast Asia network expanded outside Southeast Asia, most notably to Australia. They established a number of cells in Australia. They raised about 200,000 Australian dollars, which in many ways is a lot of money for a poor organization like JJ.

Australia was the bank of JJ. We saw a significant transfer of funds from Australia, firstly to Malaysia, when the JJ had its presence in Malaysia, until the Malaysian government detected and disrupted the JJ infrastructure there in December of 2001. And after that we have seen a significant and continual flow of funds from the cells in Australia to Indonesia, where the spiritual leader Abu Bakar Ba'asyir was located.

The JI was not created by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir; in fact, JI was created by Abdullah Sungkar, a man who was very close to Osama bin Laden and to the Egyptian leaders of al Qaeda. Osama bin Laden and Abdul Lasunkar met on three occasions in Afghanistan. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the current spiritual leader, never met with Osama bin Laden. But, of course, he was a strong supporter of Osama bin Laden, and a number of JI members went with this knowledge to Afghanistan, trained and also planned and prepared a number of operations in Southeast Asia.

Joint al Qaeda-JI Operations

Very quickly, I want to look at a few operations – joint al Qaeda-JI operations in Southeast Asia – that will give you an insight into the intentions and the capabilities of these groups. We have seen that, in parallel with 9/11, al Qaeda was very keen to develop a number of operational targets in Southeast Asia. And the background for this was, in fact, the first planning meeting for 9/11, which was held in Southeast Asia; we saw two of the 9/11 hijackers arriving in Thailand and later into Kuala Lumpur, where they met in an apartment in a condominium that was purchased by Yazid Sufaat, a former captain in the Malaysian army and a U.S.-trained bio-chemist, who was also the head of al Qaeda's anthrax program.

We have seen that soon after the January 2000 meeting, the first two hijackers entered the United States. They traveled from Malaysia to Thailand and into the United States. We have also seen Tawfig bin Attash, the mastermind of Cole; he was in the region during that period. So, the very important leaders visited Southeast Asia. We have also seen an operation to destroy 11 U.S. airlines that was doubled up by al

Qaeda that was in fact primarily developed by a man by the name of Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, the February 1993 World Trade Center bomber. He developed this operation with Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the 1991 mastermind to destroy these planes. Of course, he was subsequently arrested in Pakistan, and his pilot, Abdul Hakim Murad, was also arrested in the Philippines. Wali Khan Amin Shah, another member of that cell, was arrested in Malaysia.

And that was in many ways the genesis of the 9/11 operation. So, you can see that Southeast Asia has been a very important place in the development of the 9/11 operation. Firstly, the very concept of crashing planes into high profile targets and subsequently a sanctuary where these leaders met and discussed these operations. But, we have seen that immediately after 9/11, 21-year-old Canadian-Kuwaiti Mohammed Mansour Jabarah arrived in Southeast Asia and he was directly under the control of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who planned to attack the U.S. Embassy and the Israeli Embassy in the Philippines, together with Hambali and Mohammed Mansour Jabarah. This operation was aborted after mounting surveillance on those targets. They realized they were difficult targets to take, so they decided to attack four diplomatic targets in Singapore: the Australian, the British, the Israeli and the American diplomatic missions. And they also mounted surveillance on U.S. naval targets in Singapore. But, when the Singaporean security service, the first service in Southeast Asia, detected JI and many countries in the region disrupted the JI network, we saw that al Qaeda started moving its targeting from hard targets into soft targets.

And in many ways, it was the disruption of the JI plans to attack those diplomatic and

those military targets, the disruption of that operation that led JI to go for soft targets, primarily the targeting of Bali in the Marriott and a number of targets in Bangkok and Patayah. In Bangkok, they also considered destroying a number of diplomatic targets: the Australian, British, American, Israeli, as well as the Singapore mission. So, you can see that fighting JI is like fighting a balloon. If you squeeze a balloon in one place, it bulges out in another place. In many ways you can think of a JI member as a shark, always rapidly moving in search of new targets.

Hambali has been removed, a very significant victory, but once again, JI still maintains significant infrastructure in Thailand and in Indonesia. For instance, in Indonesia and in Thailand, JI is not a terrorist organization. Both of these governments have not prescribed JI as a terrorist group. Only JI members who have participated in terrorism or JI members who are planning and preparing terrorist attacks have been arrested. But, it's perfectly legal for anyone to be a member of JI in Thailand or in Indonesia.

Fight Against Jihad and Terrorism Is Just Beginning

So, in many ways, the fight against jihad and its associated groups is just beginning. As long as these groups maintain significant infrastructure, significant support and operational infrastructure – supporting infrastructure being propaganda, fundraising, procurement, training, safe houses, transportation – and operational infrastructure – meaning the infrastructure for mounting surveillance and recurrences on targets, conducting ambushes, assassinations, and other forms of attacks. As long as the infrastructure is intact, Southeast Asia will witness terrorist attacks. We have seen on a global scale an average of one attack every

year by al Qaeda all by its associated groups prior to 9/11.

After 9/11, we have seen attacks on an average of every three months by associated groups of al Qaeda or al Qaeda per se mounting an attack. But what we have seen is that the threat has clearly moved beyond al Qaeda, because al Qaeda has suffered gravely at the hands of the U.S.-led fight against al Qaeda.

Let me very quickly conclude this presentation by looking at the last two waves of attacks by al Qaeda and its associated groups, and let me give you an idea of how the threat is moving beyond al Qaeda. In the month of May we witnessed five attacks by al Qaeda and its associated groups. On the 12th of May we witnessed as al Qaeda attacked residences in Riyadh. That operation was an al Qaeda operation. On the same day we saw an attack in Chechnya. An associated group of al Qaeda mounted that attack. On the 14th of May, another attack in Chechnya; on the 16th of May, we saw coordinated, simultaneous attacks against Moroccan Jewish targets in Casablanca in Morocco. That attack was not by al Qaeda, it was by a group called Assirat al-Moustaqim or “Straight Path,” or a group that was trained, armed, and financed by al Qaeda, very much like Jemaah Islamiyah. And the day before that, on the 15th of May, we saw Lashkar-e-Toeba, a Pakistani group that mounted and coordinated simultaneous attacks against 21 gas stations. Within 30 minutes, all those gas stations in Southern Karachi were destroyed.

Of those five attacks, only one attack was by al Qaeda. The other attacks were by associated groups. So, today the threat has clearly moved beyond al Qaeda. Today, the groups that are conducting the largest number of attacks and attacks that are as

lethal as al Qaeda are the groups that were trained, armed and financed by al Qaeda. Al Qaeda, per se, has suffered a lot as a result of coordinated, sustained action against al Qaeda.

Let me very quickly look at the wave of attacks that took place before the month of May. In the month of October we saw three attacks. The first attack was on the 6th of October, an attack where Limburg, the French oil super-tank was attacked off Yemen. That attack was al Qaeda working with the Islamic Army of the Abyan in Aden. And on the 8th of October, we saw two U.S. personnel being attacked and that attack was by al Qaeda snipers. One soldier was killed, the other was injured. Then, on the 12th of October, we saw Bali: 202 people killed, 88 of them Australians, and over 100 Westerners killed.

If you look at those three attacks in the month of October, the attack against Limburg, the U.S. personnel in Kuwait and Bali, what attack bore the most fatalities? It was the Bali attack. Again, it was not by al Qaeda, it was a group armed, trained and financed by al Qaeda.

Associated al Qaeda Groups Becoming Greatest Threat

So, in conclusion, what I would like to say is that today what we are seeing is that the associated groups of al Qaeda are becoming the greatest threat. And in the next phase in the fight against terrorism it is very important for the U.S. intelligence community – and intelligence communities of other nations that directly engage in the fight against terrorism – to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the groups operating in the global south and the groups other than al Qaeda, because their knowledge of al Qaeda is profound. They have

much information and much knowledge about al Qaeda, especially as a result of detaining debriefs.

Today, in order to fight the next wave of terrorism, what is imperative is to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the groups, the vanguard, al Qaeda armed, trained, financed and most importantly, ideologies in Afghanistan throughout the 1990s and subsequently. And these are the groups that will be the biggest threat to international and domestic security, at least in the midterm.

David Steinberg: Thank you, Dr. Gunaratna. We'll turn now to Dr. Jackson, who will offer some comments on the subject.

Karl Jackson: Well, it is with a certain amount of humility that I attempt to comment on such an encyclopedic knowledge of what is going on on an almost day-to-day basis on the part of al Qaeda and its affiliated organizations around the world. I think we owe a considerable debt to Dr. Gunaratna's presentation here today, as well as to his book on terrorism.

I noted, however, that he was introduced by my distinguished colleague, as being the "Head of Terrorism" at the Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, which makes me loathe to be critical. I mean after all, I assume that he is actually the head of the study of terrorism.

But, I started working on similar terrorist groups about 35 years ago when I was a graduate student. And I worked on something called the Dar'ul Islam Rebellion, the forebears of Jemaah Islamiah. Listening to your speech, I couldn't help thinking of how similar it all sounds. That is, these are the kinds of groups that have been present for a long, long time in Southeast Asia, but

there are certain very novel elements that have come about in the last two to three decades that led to the kind of explosion on the international scene that we have seen since 9/11.

Some of the characteristics that seemed very familiar to me were the fact that there are small numbers of people involved. We're really talking about tiny numbers of people involved. When I was working on the Dar'ul Islam Rebellion, at its height it never had more than 4,000 armed operatives, and yet they were able to tie up an area with 20 million people living in it, tie it in a knot for 14 years – small, covert networks operating in large populations against weak governments, that is, governments that do not have a high capacity for either intelligence work or alternatively the concentration of corrosive force, or most importantly of all, for providing the kind of relief to the tiny minority that might be attracted to this kind of movement. Those were the two or three things that were lacking when I was working on this 35 years ago. And I think they are the things that are still lacking today.

Covert Networks Hard to Stamp out

These are covert networks. We should not kid ourselves, these covert networks will be very, very hard to stamp out, both in individual Southeast Asian countries and around the globe. It took 14 years to do the job in West Java and the Dar'ul Islam had no external cash, no external weapons. In addition to being small and covert, obviously they used irregular tactics, which means that the defensive side has to protect everything whereas, obviously, the terrorist can pick and choose his targets.

Another similar characteristic is that when you find and neutralize a particular opera-

tive, the network has the capacity to replace operatives who are either captured or killed. The network may not be able to replace them with people who are as skillful as the original ones, but nonetheless, we should be realistic about this and realize that it is going to take a long time to deal with these movements, simply because of the fact that they can replace themselves.

Another similarity that I found in your writings, as well as other writings on terrorism, is that these terrorist movements are usually led by middle class or upper middle class people who are highly educated, often in the West, often in technological fields, such as engineering and chemistry. I don't think we should find this particularly astonishing. Most revolutionary movements are led by people who have this sort of curriculum vitae.

The follower-ship, as opposed to the leadership, tends to come from the lower parts of the social structure. These people tend to be less well-educated, obviously, than the leadership, and they tend to be less fervent and coherent in their ideological beliefs. So, the kinds of people that Dr. Gunaratna was describing ideologically are quite different sometimes from the rank and file followers.

Now, where does that leave us all? What are the novel elements since I first worked on this? First of all, the arrival of substantial amounts of cash; I didn't know when I was sitting grading exams at Berkeley in 1975 in a gasoline line that there would be a direct relationship between the rise of the real price of oil and the enrichment of the gulf states and a respawning, a regeneration of the kind of terrorism that I had studied earlier. Substantial amounts of cash are a major difference.

Secondly, the mass media are now truly global. There was no publicity for the terrorists I was working on in West Java in the 1960s. There were virtually no radios in West Java, and no television. And if Kartosoewirjo's people blew up a village, their terrorist activities received no coverage. Now, any single terrorist event is instantaneously a worldwide event. This is an enormous advantage, politically, to terrorist groups.

I would contend, as Dr. Gunaratna does, that there has been a globalization of the concept of jihad. Now, that kind of globalization was always present, it was always seen as the Ummat Islam, the worldwide community of Islam going after the Kafirs, but we never saw it operationalized in quite the same way before. You never saw it operationalized against a far away target like the World Trade Center. You expected attacks in Java, you expected attacks in Mindanao, but you didn't expect attacks in Manhattan.

Now, the other major change is the transnational nature of the linkages. Before, these movements used to be primarily, almost exclusively local, but now they definitely do have some transnational linkages – although I think I would still place primary emphasis on the local roots of each of these movements, rather than their international linkages.

Patience and Lowered Expectations Only Realistic Way to Address Policy

Now, how does one begin to come to grips with this kind of movement? How do you beat this thing? First of all, intelligence is more important than firepower. Secondly, I would counsel patience and lowered expectations as the only realistic way to address policy. You must expect at least a

10 to 15-year campaign if you're going to be successful. If you try to sell the public in Indonesia or in Thailand or in the United States on the idea that this is going to be done quickly, and all wrapped up, I think you're creating political problems for yourself that you will regret.

I think the third thing is you try to spread your political and your military resources out over time. You play for the long-run, rather than attempting to wrap it up in the smallest amount of time possible.

I would also say you don't fall for the idea that counter-terrorism is simply social work by another name. Yes, poverty is related to it. But, the correlation is fairly low and the people who get into these movements are a tiny fragment, a tiny proportion of the poorest of the poor, and a tiny proportion of the upper middle class. That's what makes it so difficult to root these people out and find them.

And the final thing that I would add is that successful operations against terrorist networks have a political side to them. You cannot do it by firepower alone. You have to find a way to attract away from the movement, peel off from the movement, particular operatives. It is much cheaper and much more efficient than trying to kill them or imprison them.

Best Counter-Terror Operations Seduce Citizens with Benefits

The best counter-insurgency and the best counter-terror operations are those that seduce rather than kill. And by this I mean offering jobs, offering the return to society, offering amnesty, et cetera, et cetera. Not because you like them or because you approve of what they have done, but simply from a pragmatic point of view, this is a

more effective way to do it, and the critical element of this is to drive a wedge between the really committed leadership of the movement and the rank and file, many of whom have been brought into the movement for other reasons. Thank you very much.

Steinberg: We'll turn to Professor Dalpino.

Catharin Dalpino: Thank you. I thought I would be very brief, because I know we want to get to questions, that I would take on the issue of what this all means for U.S. policy and the somewhat agitated coughing you've heard from me for the past 30 seconds was because I was afraid Karl was straying into that stuff.

Jackson: But, I was totally oblivious, so it didn't matter.

Dalpino: I realized that, so I stopped coughing. That really requires that we look at ourselves as well as at Southeast Asia and at the assumptions about Southeast Asia, about terrorism, about Islam and Southeast Asia in the broader policy community in Washington. And I want to stress that I'm thinking of the broader community, not specifically or only the U.S. government, because even within the U.S. government there's a fair amount of variation and points of view.

First of all, it is true, I think to some degree the old saying that "We're always fighting the last war" holds in this and in counter-terrorism as well. And there are elements of Cold War thinking in our approach to counter-terrorism, or have been since September 11th. We had tended in the Cold War to see a vertical structure and to believe that if you had a developing country that posed a threat or was perceived as an enemy that you could in many ways weak-

en that country by weakening its relationship with its patron or by weakening the patron itself.

So, certainly the strategy that the United States applied in its attempt to exit Vietnam was to change our relationship with China and with the Soviet Union in the hope that this would bring Hanoi to the bargaining table, if it did not vanquish it. And to a certain extent that worked, at least for our purposes of extricating ourselves from the war.

Professor Gunaratna is right in pointing out, however, that al Qaeda's weakening has not weakened their associate groups in Southeast Asia. In fact, we're seeing a surge in strength from these groups that belies that kind of a framework. I think we have to consciously overturn our framework in that sense. You might see in the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy that was released last year by the government a nice, comforting vertical graph that they used.

They choose Southeast Asia, and in particular al Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiyah, and Abu Sayyaf. To be sure, the strategy was not suggesting that lopping off al Qaeda would automatically take care of the associate groups below it. But just the very ordering of that in a vertical way was comforting to Americans because it did invoke that Cold War framework. I think we need to rethink that.

Problems of U.S. Approach to War Against Terrorism in SE Asia

Second, I think that Professor Gunaratna is right when he says that the United States is pursuing a hunter rather than a fisherman approach in the war against terrorism. And that has a couple of particular problems, with respect to Southeast Asia: it is far

easier to go after material, individuals, and finances than it is to undermine radical Islamist ideology. And it's all the harder if you are an external actor with the profile of the United States.

That leaves us then to try to support moderate Islam wherever we can find it as a counterweight, but even that carries some risks, because we're more or less left to work through proxies and surrogates, and there is a refracting element in that that carries some dangers.

I think that Karl's point about trying to separate some of the radicals, particularly those extremists who advocate violence from those who don't is a very important one. That does not necessarily tell us what policies the United States should pursue to do that. Southeast Asia, particularly in contrast to other targets and other regions, is not given to a military approach towards counter-terrorism – this would be the uber-hunter to counter-terrorism. However, our main military campaign in Southeast Asia against terrorists is against the Abu Sayyaf which, depending on whose statistics you believe, has either 50 or 200 people in it. And we have not even been successful in totally eliminating them.

U.S. Short-term Policy Is Not Set Up to Accommodate Long War

Third, I endorse what Karl and Professor Gunaratna say, either explicitly or by implication, that this is a long haul, a war of attrition, and a cyclical war. But, the truth is that our short-term policy environment is not particularly set up to accommodate that kind of war. In particular, some of the immediate affects of a corrosive approach to counter-terrorism or repression are going to be backlashes, and that is not necessarily going to look like progress in a short-term

policy environment. And the closer that we get to our own presidential election, the more attention is going to be focused on these outputs and whether or not we really, indeed, are winning the war on terrorism.

Labels are important and Professor Gunaratna talked about the Jemaah Islamiyah not being designated a terrorist organization. It's a dilemma for us in our policy in Southeast Asia, because we have to have a meeting of the minds, between a host government and the United States, before we declare a particular group a terrorist organization and all that implies.

We had no problem declaring the Abu Sayyaf a terrorist group and we were very happy to declare our old friends the New Peoples Army in the Philippines as one, but obviously the MILF is a very different situation, as is the JI. Not declaring those groups terrorist organizations is a matter of political nuance that might not well be understood, particularly by some of the more conservative elements in Washington, who favor going after these groups with everything we have.

An adjunct point in terms of supporting moderate Islam or not is that our political support, particularly for heads of state or politicians who are very bullish on fighting terrorism, can turn into a political liability in that country. We don't know where that line is every time. I think we saw some of that with respect to President Bush's recent trip to Southeast Asia, where he got a somewhat arms length treatment from President Megawati in Bali, because she herself has her own election to look to. And so, even automatic or knee-jerk support for those who might very well be our strongest friends and our strongest allies in counter-terrorism is not necessarily going to do what we want it to do.

We are also, I think - and this is a broader problem with respect to our policy in Southeast Asia - we are not accustomed to viewing Southeast Asia in a global context. And I think Professor Gunaratna's point about the increasing globalization of Southeast Asian Islamists and their increasing mindset in terms of world Islam is a very important point. But I don't think our policy paradigms really run to that, with respect to Southeast Asia at the present time. We have a lot of national denial or national indifference or national amnesia with respect to the region that we're only slowly recovering from. And September 11th has helped accelerate that recovery. But, we really need to update our views of Southeast Asia. Our tendency to view Southeast Asia as solely concerned with their own local conflicts or their own parochial issues is outdated.

Dangerous Disconnects in U.S. Domestic and Foreign Policy

Lastly, in terms of addressing radical Islamist theology in Southeast Asia, we have to remember what Zachary Abuza at Simmons College reminds us: to be careful not to make more terrorists than we capture. In particular, one of the things that we are prone to are some dangerous disconnects in our policy in both our domestic policy and our foreign policy, because we are fighting a war against terrorism at home as well. And often times, we don't really look at the implications of a domestic policy. And let me give you two examples. One was the fact that last year the very week that Indonesia was running the US government's documentary on Muslims in the United States on its national television, and was the only Southeast Asian country to do so, was the very week that the INS announced that Indonesian males in the United States had to register.

This discrepancy was not lost on Indonesia. It could not have come at a worse time in terms of our public relations push there. A more recent disconnect between our foreign policy and our domestic policy that has an impact on our image in Southeast Asia, and one that has been much discussed in the last week: President Bush strode across the lobby at the Bangkok APEC meeting and chastised Prime Minister Mahathir for his anti-Semitic remarks at the OIC, and yet made no similar remarks about General Boykin and his own remarks here in the United States.

And that, I think, is an example of a very dangerous disconnect. As Southeast Asia is becoming more globalized, we too are part of this global mindset and have to think about the implications of what we do at home, as well as in other regions upon Southeast Asia. Thank you.

Q & A

Steinberg: Thank you very much. If I may take the prerogative of the chair and ask a couple of questions of Dr. Gunaratna – quick ones. The first is the question of the ASEAN anti-terror center: How effective do you think that will be and what can it do? The second question is, in so far as the United States responds to terrorism by assisting moderate Islamic groups in Southeast Asia, does that undercut their credibility in their own society?

Gunaratna: The ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Center in Malaysia is a Malaysian center because there are only Malaysians working in that center. I believe for that center to be effective, the Malaysians should bring in other nationalities to serve in that center. When you fight terrorism – today the type of terrorist group we are fighting, they are called network organizations, so you need

to build a network to fight a network. One nationality cannot fight a terrorist network. So, I think that the real power of that regional center will be only if the Malaysian leaders can develop a truly regional center by inviting other nationalities to work with the Malaysians.

Terrorist's Ideology Should Be Broken

Your second question is a very important question, because I personally believe that when we fight terrorism we must develop a multi-pronged, multi-dimensional, multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional and a multi-national approach. That is, we should not only use our military instruments to kill or capture terrorists, but we should break their ideology, we should send a very powerful message to the politicized and the radicalized Muslim communities: that al Qaeda and JI are not Koranic groups, that they are heretical organizations, that they are continually misinterpreting and misrepresenting Islam, and they're presenting a corrupt version of Islam.

This is something that the United States or the European nations or the non-Muslim nations can do. The rich countries of the world must work with the Muslim countries, must work with Muslim community leaders, nongovernmental organizations, religious institutions and educational institutions, to send that message. So certainly, as we perceive this country, this is not a clash of civilizations between the West and the Muslims. This is a clash among the civilization, between the moderate Muslims and the extremist Muslims, between the extremist terrorist groups and the progressive Muslim parties.

So, certainly the West and the others who can assist should empower those moderate and progressive leaders and organizations

to stand up and to fight against those forces of extremism and those forces of terror.

Questioner: Can I jump onto the floor?

Steinberg: Sure. Identify yourself please and ask your question of any one on the panel.

Questioner: I have a quick question. In terms of Southeast Asia or South Asia, when you speak of al Qaeda and its international mission, as opposed to a national mission, do you see any signs that indigenous national political systems feel a national threat, whether it's a Muslim majority country, or even a Buddhist majority country?

I'm thinking, for example, of Cambodia, where you have 11 million Buddhists, and yet I think it was in the summer time they threw out something like 28 foreign madrassa educators, theologians, if there's any perception of that.

And then my second question is in terms of this moderate versus radical, internal, theological debate in Islam – whether there are such expressions in madrassas themselves, let alone among politicians, American or whoever – are there internal theological debates between the madrassas themselves?

Gunaratna: Certainly, the governments in Southeast Asia perceive a real threat from these groups. But again, you must understand that no government, including the government of the United States of America, Canada and European countries, never moved against terrorist groups actively and aggressively until terrorism touched them. So Southeast Asian governments are no exception. The Indonesian government lived in total denial until Bali. The Indonesian government was told repeatedly: if

there's a terrorist network in your country, we will attack you. And they will use your soil to launch attacks against neighboring countries. But, the government never took the threat seriously until Bali had happened.

Europe and North America Have Been Notorious for Tolerating Foreign Terrorist Organizations

The Western countries are no different. Until terrorism touches any society, or any country, that country will not move against a terrorist group. So, it is a very tragic aspect of our lives that until the government perceives a direct and immediate threat, terrorist groups are able to develop propaganda, fundraising, procurement and transportation networks and funnel those resources to conduct terrorist attacks elsewhere. For that reason, Western Europe and North America has been particularly notorious for tolerating so many foreign terrorist organizations for years, until 9/11.

You can see of the \$150 million worth of money that has been frozen, most money has been frozen in Western Europe and in North America. And we see groups like Global Relief, or Benevolence International – the FBI and the CIA knew about these groups, that these groups were funding extremist organizations and terrorist groups. But there was no political will to go after those charities until 9/11. And it is the same in the case of Southeast Asian governments. They have been slow to recognize that it is important to go after these groups.

Thailand went after Hambali and some infrastructure there because a very important summit was going to come. In the case of Thailand, in the case of Cambodia, it's the same. So, I believe that countries that do not act against terrorism will finally suf-

fer and then they will be forced to target those organizations.

With regard to internal debate, certainly, there is internal debate. There are thousands and thousands of madrassas in Southeast Asia. There are tens of thousands of madrassas, but there are only six madrassas in Indonesia that are preaching hatred, jihad. The Al-Mukmin in Solo, central Java is the number one madrassa that preaches hatred, and most of the terrorists have come from that madrassa.

Governments Must Audit Madrassas

So I think that the governments in that region must develop a model where they audit the curricula of these madrassas. They should not shut down those madrassas, because if you shut down a madrassa, they'll go and open a new madrassa. That should not be our model. Our model should be to audit those madrassas and to impart harsh punishments against either the teachers or against those institutions, if they permit those educational and religious institutions to be abused and misused by clerics or by any other party that is interested. And I think that we need to promote more debate and more discussion within the Islamic community so that the radicals and the extremists will have no space to mobilize and radicalize a Muslim youth to further their narrow political agendas.

Questioner: It's been more than two years since 9/11, and many suicide bombings have been happening in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, including Israel, but fortunately none in the United States. My question is: why? I would guess it's very easy for any terrorist organization to cause a serious terror and damage and concern and so on inside the United States. All you need to do is recruit 19 people who are ready and

willing to die, send them in with maybe 20 pounds of bombs, respectively, wrapped around their bodies, send them to metro stations, shopping centers, restaurants, supermarkets and have them explode simultaneously in one single day at 19 different places in New York and Washington, D.C. I'm sure I would be more terrified than I felt on September 11, 2001, because those bombings—suicide bombings in my neighborhood—would be much, much closer to my daily life.

Three Factors Explain Lack of Terrorist Attacks in the United States Since 9/11

Gunaratna: To reiterate, there are three factors why there has been no terrorist attack in the United States since 9/11. One is heightened public vigilance, second is unprecedented intelligence and law enforcement cooperation, and third is that Americans are aggressively hunting these groups both at home and overseas. And if you look at the two different models of suicide attacks, there is the al Qaeda model and there are the Palestinian groups that do suicide attacks. The al Qaeda model, they recruit members and they train them to a very high degree so that when those suicide terrorists are inducted to the target zone, introduced to the target zone, they can survive in the target zone for a long period of time.

Take Mohammed Atta. So, even after living an American life and wearing American clothes and American shoes, and enjoying American life, they will still carry out their mission after one or two years because they have been heavily indoctrinated, trained over a long period of time. And al Qaeda always controlled their mind even though they were in the United States.

The second type of suicide bombers are the Palestinian groups. These suicide bombers are not trained over a long period of time. They receive very short ideological indoctrination and they are sent to the target zone and waiting a few hours or waiting a few days, they take the target. So, certainly, to induct operatives to the United States, it's a process that takes a long time. So the model of the Palestinian groups will not work.

You need to follow the al Qaeda model if you're a terrorist. And that means you have to train a terrorist for a long period of time and send him to the United States. From all the debriefings of the military committee members of al Qaeda, what we know is that al Qaeda does not have so many high-quality operators to send to the United States, because al Qaeda as an organization has suffered gravely in the past two years.

But certainly, if the pre-9/11 environmental conditions return, conditions of complacency, conditions where al Qaeda is able to reopen their camps, re-recruit and provide training, certainly they will do that again. But, we must also understand that the quality of people who came for the 9/11 mission - they were of very high quality - they were recruited from the migrant communities in Germany.

They were migrants. They were members of a diaspora. They were recruited, and basically al Qaeda built a bridge from pre-modern Afghanistan to the post-modern United States and they transferred men and material and finance and ideas to accomplish that operation. They can do such an operation again, but not in these conditions. Today, the security environment is not conducive for al Qaeda to mount such an operation.

Questioner: My question is about when you spoke about the clash of civilizations. There has been media hype frenzy about the clash of civilizations, about jihad. Do you think it's over-hyped? Do you believe that it builds up antagonism, or is it necessary to educate people about jihad?

Gunaratna: Osama bin Laden wants there to be a clash of civilizations. But I think that for us to recognize that there is a clash of civilizations will be a mistake. It is because the vast majority of the Muslim people do not want there to be a clash of civilizations. It's a very small percentage of Muslims who have been politicized and radicalized that they believe that the West must be attacked, that the right people must be killed. A vast majority of Asian and Middle Eastern Muslims want to live in harmony. They want to lead their normal lives. So I think that certainly, there is a clash of civilizations, but it is limited to a very small percentage, whether it is people living in the West, or whether it is people living elsewhere in the world. And I think vast majority of people are willing to coexist. For instance, the Muslims in Asia: they live under the shadow of large Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian communities. They have no problems whatsoever of coexisting with these people, and they're quite moderate and proud of it. So, I think that we must do whatever it takes to promote that coexistence.

Questioner: I thought you made a very telling point when you said that in the medium to long-run the most important strategy against this brand of terrorism is to de-legitimize their ideology in the eyes of their own communities in which they operate.

My question is, is that primarily a process that has to take place within the Muslim world, or is there a role for the outside in

behaving in ways or sending signals or engaging in certain ways that can allow that process to go forward? One might not be too heartened if one hears what President Bush heard on his visit, in his meeting with moderate Muslims, that many people in the Muslim world and Southeast Asia see the war on terrorism as actually a war on Islam, and they mistakenly believe that. What is your message to Washington in helping to promote the de-legitimatization of these radical groups, and what can be done in the form of policy and medium term engagement?

U.S. Should Modify Its Behavior

Gunaratna: I fully agree with what you said. I think that Washington should modify its behavior. The actions of the American bureaucracy has in many ways given so much oxygen to the Islamists. For instance, U.S. intervention in Iraq: there's no concrete evidence of al Qaeda links with Saddam Hussein. And I think that the United States will pay a heavy price for it. So will the allies and the friends of the United States. And I think that the United States had tremendous success in the fight against al Qaeda.

The Middle Eastern and the Asian countries fully cooperated with the United States in the fight against al Qaeda. But U.S. intervention in Iraq has created much anger and resentment against the United States and that cooperation has suffered. So, I think in such an environment, it is very difficult for moderate Muslim leaders to stand up and criticize those extremist Muslim leaders. So I think that certainly, there must be more long-range thinking on the part of the U.S. government. That is one.

Second, the United States should invest more in public diplomacy. The United

States has invested traditionally in state-to-state relations. Often we have seen Middle Eastern rulers put on a very positive face when they deal with the U.S. government, but with their own people they have projected a different face. A face of duplex by saying the United States is an evil regime, just to win the support of some of their Muslim constituents.

But I think if the U.S. engages in public diplomacy, where the U.S. directly explains to those people: “We have built your roads, we have given you medical assistance, health, schools;” what the United States has done in the Middle East, if it could be explained to those people, I think that the United States will have much more support from the Muslims, from the Muslim world.

I think that way the United States and the international community will be able to empower those moderate Muslim leaders to challenge those leaders of extremism. And as long as the United States is not going to invest in nongovernmental organizations and in the Muslim public, it will be very difficult for those moderate leaders to take the fight and have a debate and discussion in a way to marginalize those leaders of extremism.

How Terrorists Become Marginalized in Society

Jackson: I’d like to jump in at this point. I think the whole question of how terrorists get marginalized in a society has to do with several things. Of prime importance is the political dynamic of the society itself. No set of foreigners anywhere, no matter how sophisticated, can in effect cause Indonesia to become much more militant about taking on its group of terrorists. No. This must be an Indonesian political evolution.

I watched the earlier political evolution against the Dar’ul Islam, and that evolution was caused primarily by the Dar’ul Islam itself. That is, the utilization of terror and terror tactics increased the longer the Dar’ul Islam rebellion went on. It alienated villagers by killing them, and killing them in rapacious and despicable ways.

Secondly, when they tried to kill the president of the country, Sukarno, that got the attention of the political elite and, lo and behold, the military pulled up its socks and went after the Dar’ul Islam.

My point here is that you can’t substitute foreign strength or foreign dedication for a domestic political evolution, and that’s one of the reasons why this is going to take a long time. It’s not easy, it’s a very subtle thing. It’s not like sending hardware to country X or even having – with all due respect to the correct programming on USIS or USIA. It’s not that simple. It’s going to be much tougher.

Steinberg: Before the Iraq war I did a piece for the *National Harold Tribune* on the dangers of the Iraq war for Indonesia. I had an email from the American embassy saying I was going to be wrong, and I said I hoped I was going to be wrong. But, I still am questioning.

Sir, you had a question, in the second row there.

Questioner: Dr. Karl Jackson made a statement regarding how to counter terrorism, but he didn’t mention a solution: the permission of the Asian Counter-Terrorism Center and also the development of networks against other networks. But that’s the problem, because in South Asia people perceive fighting terrorism as part of the

news by the national government to suppress their local political opposition.

Now, the point is this: Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and also Indonesia are fighting terrorism by using the International Security Act. It's not well-exposed to the people. The people are still imbalanced. If you want to counter terrorism by using ISA, that's not the reason, that's not the valid way to counter terrorism. So, what's the best way? The court of law, the due process, and bring these people into the court of law, and you, as an expert in terrorism, become the witness. Expose all of them on the witness stand and fight them in a court of law. With that, I think the danger of terrorism will be subsidized because people are fully confident and have full confidence to say that the government has a good legal step to counter terrorism in a very transparent and comfortable manner. But at the moment, a lot of people are very skeptical because Singapore in particular, by producing reports, by having press conferences, having press releases and putting them behind ISA – that is not the correct way to fight counter-terrorism. Thank you.

Special Situations Demand Special Laws

Gunaratna: Special situations demand special laws. The United States could have never responded to the 9/11 attack if it did not develop special laws, emergency legislation and special measures to meet the challenges that it faced. Similarly, the ISA has become extremely useful to Malaysia and Singapore. Without the ISA, I do not think those two countries would have made the strides they made against terrorism.

Today, Indonesia has failed gravely to fight terrorism because it has no law like the ISA. I'm not advocating that Indonesia develops ISA, I'm advocating that Indo-

nesia develops the type of legislation that can prescribe or designate a terrorist organization, because if you go after individual leaders, you will never defeat a terrorist organization. You have to criminalize a group, you have to go after their propaganda, their fundraising organs, their infrastructure that is doing the training, their transportation infrastructure and their assets, and destroy the group.

I think that you need strong laws to fight these kinds of groups. You cannot use ordinary laws. Extraordinary circumstances demand extraordinary laws. You cannot fight the day-to-day laws that you have in your country, in any country, to fight terrorism. It would be a big mistake.

Questioner: Some of those ISA laws and colonial laws in the colonial period?

Gunaratna: Certainly. The British are responsible.

Questioner: But that doesn't take away from your overall point that the ISA shouldn't be used against people who are not involved in terrorist activities against the government.

Gunaratna: Yes. I agree with you with regard that we should not use such laws to go after political opponents. I also agree with you that the legislative measures that we take against a group must be proportionate with the scale of threat. But, I can tell you that it would be wrong to criticize the ISA. Singapore and Malaysia have responded effectively against the terrorist threat because of the ISA. And I can tell you that, having been in Singapore, that Singapore has not abused or misused the ISA against any organization connected with terrorism. All the members who have

been detained in Singapore certainly are members of the JI network.

Questioner: On page 112, Dr. Gunaratna, you are quoted as saying that, “There is little evidence that the Abu Sayyaf group receives volunteer contributions from individuals, NGOs or commercial companies.” And furthermore, it goes down, it says, “As the Philippine National Security Advisor, Roy Lugal has said, we have no evidence that Abu Sayyaf has gotten financing from bin Laden recently, otherwise they would not have to resort to kidnapping. Thus, the Bush administration assertion that the ASG is linked to al Qaeda is tenuous at best.” And then also a Philippino-Muslim journalist says that, “Before, they were tied to bin Laden, but not anymore. They’re independent. They get money from kidnappings. They are an independent cell.” He continued, “Now they are linked with Osama bin Laden, but it is a spiritual link because of a shared interpretation of jihad.”

So, I wanted your comment on this and perhaps, Professor Dalpino, because it also talks about U.S. Foreign Policy.

Gunaratna: Abuza’s book is a very good book, and I must tell you that Abu Sayyaf Group is certainly linked very closely to al-Qaeda. In fact, Abdul Hakim Murad, the first al Qaeda pilot who is now in U.S. custody, he mentions in his debriefing to the FBI that Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, the first World Trade Center bomber, went to the South Philippines and trained Abu Sayyaf Group in the use of explosives.

This itself is a very clear indication of the initial ties between al Qaeda and Abu Sayyaf group. There are more recent debriefings of ASG members who are being held in the Philippines, of al Qaeda trainers, combat trainers, combat tacticians, explo-

sive experts coming to the region, providing training to MILF, to JI and ASG. Certainly, of the groups that are active in Southeast Asia, ASG is one group that is very close to al Qaeda. And even if you look at some of the statements of ASG, they will always ask for the release of the blind Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, who is still in New York. And also, they have constantly used al Qaeda tactics of kidnapping Western hostages, and some of these hostages have been killed.

So, certainly it is a group, both ideologically and in practice, that is very close to al Qaeda. And I would say at this point of time that the United States has provided invaluable assistance to the Philippines in the fight against ASG. For example, night fighting, fire coordination at night and unmanned area rakers to mount surveillance on the course to detect armed shipments to the Abu Sayyaf Group. And also, the U.S. has trained more Filipinos in special forces and other small team operations that have made it very hard for a group like ASG to survive. And I think it is that kind of cooperation that will really help to reduce the threat posed by these organizations.

Dalpino: It is true that when the United States designated the Abu Sayyaf Group as a military target after September 11th, it was in part because of its known historical ties to al Qaeda. I’m not as privy to information as Professor Gunaratna is in terms of its current functioning. I think other reasons to do it as well at the time were its small size and the fact that it was apparently on the decline. It was a splinter of a splintered group rather than being necessarily on the rise.

Had the U.S. been looking for groups on the rise they might have targeted the MILF. That would have been politically much,

much more difficult. So, although ties or not, I think the perception was that we could mop up the Abu Sayyaf fairly easily. What we saw instead is that however successful we have been in terms of weakening them, we've also succeeded in dispersing them from the original point geographically. That brings complications in terms of how to proceed from here.

Questioner: A lot has been said about the goal of the JI to create a Pan-Islamic state in Southeast Asia. Do you see that changing, now that some of the important leaders like Hambali and Ba'asyir are out of the scene? Or do you see the local concerns of these groups like the JI in Indonesia and the groups in the Philippines – do you think that their local goals are more important than a creation of Pan-Islamic state at this point?

Gunaratna: The JI goal will not shift. But, certainly JI capability has suffered a lot and as a result they may not want to try to actively and aggressively reach that caliphate, because they know that physically, operationally, they can't reach that. Having said that, I should say that JI, like other Islamist groups, are reaching what is called a multigenerational campaign, a campaign from father to son, a campaign that we have already witnessed for generations. The first generation being the Muslim brotherhood from 1928 until the 1970s, then the Soviet period and then we have seen the post-Soviet period, the ten years when al Qaeda was created.

And now we have seen al Qaeda on the decline and these smaller, desperate groups emerging and becoming active on behalf of al Qaeda in Asia, Africa, Middle East and the Caucuses. So, we are basically seeing the fourth generation of Islamists. So, it is a campaign and generational change is in-

evitable. It is a campaign that when they do not have capability they will invest more in ideology, in recruitment, in training and reflection.

But, when they are strong they will fight and that is why it is so important for us to invest more in the nonmilitary aspects, in trying to break the ideology, in trying to send a message that the struggle you're waging is not Koranic, that you are basically taking passages out of the Koran, misinterpreting and misrepresenting for your narrow political ends and objectives. And unfortunately, it is a campaign where the Americans have not invested either thinking or resources, and it is the type of campaign that will really cripple these organizations in the long term.

Militarily, we can go after terrorists who have taken up arms and people who are planning to conduct these attacks, but we will be fighting them like that for maybe 10, 20, 30, 40 years. We need to break their ideological spirit.

Steinberg: We'll take one last question so the panel can then respond.

Questioner: Dr. Gunaratna, you have developed such an encyclopedia of the al Qaeda network. My question is, if you are one of the heads of operation, where would be your next target? My second question is, you know how the global network is and especially bearing in mind the environment we are living in right now, what should the government in Southeast Asia do more of?

Gunaratna: My next target would be to go for the surviving heads of al Qaeda, because I believe that America's biggest military weakness has been their failure to target Osama bin Laden and Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahri, the principal strategist of al

Qaeda. As long as the core and the permanent leadership of any terrorist groups survives, that group will be able to replenish the human losses. That is, those people who have been captured or killed, and their material support. Because a group's ability to survive and succeed depends only on one factor: support, a group's ability to replenish those members who have been killed and captured, and al-Qaeda is doing that.

They're doing that because the leadership of that group still appears very appealing. I believe that more resources must be focused on going after the leaders than just going after sympathizers, supporters and ordinary members who can be created in a very short period of time.

With regard to Southeast Asia, what I would like to say is that still some of the training camps are active in Southeast Asia. Some of the key members, experts are alive. For example, Hambali has been replaced by Zulkarnaen and it is important to go after them. I think that Cambodia has been very decisive in the fight against terrorism. The moment Cambodia realized that JI had penetrated and established a number of entities in your country you took action against that group.

But, I wish the other countries also responded in such a decisive way as Cambodia and I think that we need to create a culture, we need to create an ethos and a norm, where governments and leaders and individual citizens do not tolerate terrorism, do not condone terrorism irrespective of whether it is Islamist group or internationalist group, or whether it is a left-wing organization or a right-wing organization. And I think we are still at a very early stage of building that.

I think that is the biggest contribution we can make, where wherever we see a group attacking civilians, whether they have a legitimate cause or not, we should condemn them. And I think that is the biggest achievement we can build in Southeast Asia.

Steinberg: We'll let the panel now have the final word. Professor Jackson, do you have anything you would like to add?

U.S. Has Neglected SE Asia for 25-30 Years

Jackson: One thing we ought to recognize is that the United States has neglected Southeast Asia for about 25 to 30 years. I say that as a former policy-maker. There was no appetite for interest in much of anything that went on in Southeast Asia after 1975. A certain event happened in 1975 in Southeast Asia. And as a result, as a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs once told me, "I don't care what the bad hats are doing to the bad hats. I want to just shut off our concern for Southeast Asia." That was the attitude in the late '70s. Obviously, one of the things that has occurred since 9/11, and as a result of the Bali bombing, the JW Marriott bombing, the activities in the Philippines, the activities in Singapore, is that Washington has suddenly awakened to the need to be more concerned about what goes on in Southeast Asia. One should not expect, however, that Southeast Asia is going to be responsive in the first 10 minutes in which we begin to pay attention again.

We have systematically under-funded Fulbright fellowships for Southeast Asia for 20 years. The number of Fulbright's coming out of Indonesia is, I think, a national disgrace; the number is so small for a country of 210 million. Twelve is not enough. I'm not very good at math, but 12 is a small

number compared to 210 million. And if you're going to win the war of ideas, then I think you have to step up to the plate and spend some money to win the war of ideas.

That is to say you can't do it simply by piping in Voice of America, but you can have an impact by improving the amount of English instruction in the madrassas of Java and by improving the amount of English instruction in secular schools in Java. But, you can't have an impact on the cheap.

And finally, I would suggest that we minimize the amount of firepower that we apply to this problem and maximize the amount of intelligence that we apply to the problem and spend our money, to the extent that we spend it in Southeast Asia, in helping Southeast Asian governments deal with their own problem with terrorists, rather than trying to do it for them.

Steinberg: Ms. Dalpino?

Dalpino: I was going to offer a variation of Karl's view. I don't think he's preempted me entirely. First, as a global superpower, we have a very short attention span. And as Professor Gunaratna pointed out, it has taken some time for Southeast Asians to feel enfranchised in the war against terrorism. Although, to be fair, they have been living with problems of extremism longer than we have acknowledged.

In the year 2000, the Asia Foundation did a project called "America's Role in Asia." The project had an American component and three Asian components: Northeast, Southeast and South Asian. One of the things that came out of the Southeast Asia process, that was in fact used as a pull quote, was that Americans don't pay enough attention to terrorism. This was a year before September 11.

That said, one of the things that we heard during the time that the United States was gearing up to go into Iraq was a certain number of Southeast Asian diplomats in Washington saying, "But now that you've gotten us revved up on the counter-terrorism campaign, it looks as though you're turning away from it. It looks as though as you look towards Iraq, that you're forgetting the cooperation, you're forgetting the goals we shared in terms of counter-terrorism." Second, and I can only underscore this: general amnesia and general neglect to Southeast Asia requires a broader approach to the region as a whole. We've seen that extremism is fungible; we've seen that terrorism will look for places where it's least expected.

We need to return to looking at the silent majorities of Southeast Asia and some of the non-terrorism problems as well. One of the things that worries me is after September 11th is that US policy cuts Southeast Asia in two, into those countries which we perceive not to be important to the war on terrorism and those with significant Muslim populations. This could come back to haunt us.

Steinberg: Dr. Gunaratna, you have the last word.

Gunaratna: Thank you. I think that terrorism also has created opportunity for Southeast Asian countries to work together. Today, unlike before, we are seeing tremendous cooperation. We are seeing many Southeast Asian governments willing to create common databases, exchange of personnel, joint training, combined operations, and also a sharing of expertise and sharing of resources. I also think that there is more emphasis in Southeast Asia today to address this issue, not only from a military,

but also from an ideological and a political dimension.

Terrorism in SE Asia Came from Another Region

I think that in many ways, terrorism in Southeast Asia is something that came from another region. And that Southeast Asian Muslims – most of the Muslims are not radicalized, not politicized, and most Muslims have lived under the shadow of other non-Muslim communities; Buddhist, Hindu, Christian communities are very tolerate and very moderate. And in many ways, if we work intelligently, Southeast Asia may offer the solutions, even to the Middle East, of how communities can coexist, and how communities can marginalize political violence and these extremist organizations.

I would just offer a very brief comment on Iraq because Iraq was mentioned. I believe that the U.S. intervention in Iraq has certainly damaged the coalition in the fight against terrorism, but again, today, U.S. intervention in Iraq has been completed and today, there's no point in going back. And today, what is essential is for Southeast Asian and other governments to work together with the United States and the European countries to try to stabilize Iraq, and I believe the only way the international

community can stabilize Iraq is to develop what you call intelligence dominance.

In Afghanistan the international community has been so successful because there is intelligence dominance, there's very good information on where the terrorists are and where they're moving and what targets they're planning to strike. In Iraq, the United States and the other countries have failed to develop that scale of dominance and I believe that with more effort it will be possible to create that intelligence dominance and to prevent Iraq from becoming the new land of jihad. If you do not do that, that threat of terrorism will continue. It will continue to effect not only the Middle East; it will also spread to other regions, because today we are living in such an interconnected world that we cannot have Iraq boiling and the Southeast Asian Muslims sleeping.

So, it must be a coordinated effort, on the part of all the countries in the world, to prevent the continuation and sustenance of these conflicts, wherever it occurs. Because, wherever there is a conflict, it will finally impact and impinge negatively on another part of the world. Thank you.

Steinberg: Thank you. Please join me in thanking these panelists.

(End)

About the Panelists

Main Speaker

Dr. Rohan Gunaratna is Head of Terrorism at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and Honorary Fellow at the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, Israel. He led the team that designed and build the UN database on Al Qaeda, Taliban and Associated Entities. In 2003, he was invited to deliver the MRC lecture at Parliament House, Australia, and testify before the 9/11 Commission on Capitol Hill. Dr. Gunaratna obtained his M.A. at the University of Notre Dame and his Ph.D. at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. He is the author of the international bestseller, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (2002).

Discussants

Ms. Catharin Dalpino is Adjunct Professor in Southeast Asian studies at Georgetown University, SAIS and the George Washington University. Previously she was a Fellow at the Brookings Institution and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (1993 -97). She has also been a career officer with The Asia Foundation which included a term as the Foundation's Representative for Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. She received her M.A. from the University of California, Berkeley. Two of her recent books include *Anchoring Third Wave Democracies: Problems and Prospects for U.S. Policy* (1998) and *Deferring Democracy: Promoting Openness in Authoritarian Regimes* (2000). She has a forthcoming book on U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia after September 11, *Second Front, Second Time*.

Dr. Karl Jackson is the Director of the Asian Studies Program of the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University. Concurrently, as C.V. Starr Distinguished Professor of Southeast Asian Studies, he serves as the Director of the Southeast Asia Studies Program at SAIS. Previously, he was Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley. Professor Jackson served as the Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs from 1991-1993. Prior to that, he was Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Senior Director for Asian Affairs at the National Security Council. He also served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia from 1986-1989. Professor Jackson received his Ph.D. from MIT. He has authored and edited numerous books and articles, including *Traditional Authority, Islam and Rebellion: A Study of Indonesian Political Behavior* (1980) and edited *Cambodia 1975-1978: Rendezvous with Death* (1989).

Moderator

Dr. G. John Ikenberry is the Peter F. Krogh Professor of Geopolitics and Global Justice at Georgetown University. In addition, he has been a Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. Professor Ikenberry is the author of numerous publications, including, *State Power and World Markets: The International Political Economy* (2002), *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (2000), and *Reasons of State: Oil Politics and the Capacities of American Government* (1988).