

Countering the (Re-) Production of Militancy in Indonesia: between Coercion and Persuasion

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Abstract

In the early 2000s, Indonesia witnessed a proliferation of Islamist paramilitary groups and terror activity in the wake of Suharto's downfall. Having said this, over the years since Suharto's downfall, the dire threat predictions have largely failed to materialize at least strategically. This outcome raises some interesting questions about the ways in which Indonesian policy responded to the security threat posed by Islamist militancy. Drawing on Temby's thesis about Darul Islam and Negara Islam Indonesia and combining this with Colombijn and Lindblad's concept of 'reservoirs of violence', the following article argues that countering the conditioning factors underlying militancy and the legacy of different 'imagined de-colonizations' is critical for degrading militant threats (especially Islamist ones) in Indonesia. Persistent and excessive punitive action by the state is counter-productive in the long run. It runs too high a risk of antagonizing and further polarizing oppositional segments of the population. That in turn perpetuates a 'ghettoized' sense of enmity and alienation amongst them towards the state and wider society. By situating localized responses to the problem in historical context, the following underscores the importance of preventative persuasion measures for limiting the reproduction of militancy in Indonesia.

Keywords: counter terrorism policy; Indonesia; imagined communities; Islamism; militancy; postcolonial state.

Introduction

Militancy in Indonesia is not new if we take that to mean combative and aggressive action in support of a cause.[1] This is of no great surprise given the archipelago's size, diversity and history. From the Tuanku Imam Bonjol's Padri rebellion in the 19th century through to the rise of *Darul Islam* (DI–Abode of Islam) and *Tentara Islam Indonesia* (TII–Indonesian Islamic Army) during the long struggle against Dutch colonial rule, Indonesia has a complex history of radicalism, separatism and rebellion. It has often spilled over into ethnic and religious conflicts in places such Sambas in West Kalimantan, Sampit in Central Kalimantan, Ambon in the Moluccas and Poso in Central Sulawesi to name but a few instances.[2]

Moreover, given its recent authoritarian past, any state-led policy response to militant threats (especially Islamist ones) in Indonesia is going to be a sensitive political issue. The Indonesian Government may not officially differentiate between any particular militant groups in Indonesia but over the last decade and more, its Counter Terrorism Policy (CTP) has focused predominantly on the threat posed by militant Islamist groups operating within the jihadist orbit. In fact, Indonesia's contemporary anti-terrorism laws are largely a by-product of the 2002 Bali Bombings.[3] Although there is public support for dealing with the problem, there is also public concern over the possible return to the sort of repressive practices of the Suharto era. [4] The following article maps the contingent contours of contemporary Islamist militancy in Indonesia and the ways in which localized understandings of the problem have shaped responses. Drawing on Temby's thesis about *Darul Islam* and *Negara Islam Indonesia* and combining this with Colombijn and Lindblad's concept of 'reservoirs of violence', it argues that preventative persuasion measures are critical in countering the conditioning factors underlying Islamist militancy in Indonesia and the legacy of different 'imagined de-colonizations'.

State, Militancy and Context

Before going further, some historical context and specific analytic perspectives are useful for giving us a better sense of the reproductive capacity and ‘imaginings’ shaping militant group dynamics in Indonesia. This framing makes the seemingly sporadic, periodic and episodic qualities of contemporary Islamist militancy in Indonesia slightly more intelligible. In fact, the contemporary terrain of Indonesian militancy displays a number of significant conditioning developments. Historically speaking, overlapping strands of national, religious, and cultural identity have created some uneasy tensions in Indonesia. While there can be little doubt of the significance of Islam as a religion in Indonesia, during both the colonial and postcolonial periods some contentious and ambiguous relationships and interactions formed between the state, international contexts and the polity’s cultural-religious identification, especially in terms of Islam as a mobilizing force.[5] In fact, there have been numerous attempts simultaneously to harness and curtail Islam’s state-level ambitions.[6]

In a broad schematic sense, we can trace a three-way split in Indonesia as a variety of ‘identity politics’ evolved in response to tensions created by the emergence of the modern nation-state, namely traditionalist, modernist and radical.[7] In terms of political Islam, the traditionalist response gave rise to the massive Sunni Islamic socio-religious organization, *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU–Awakening of Ulama) with members numbering in the tens of million. In the immediate post-independence era, the modernist Islamic party *Masyumi* (the Council of Muslim Organizations) was the major Islamic political party in the fledgling republic. *Muhammadiyah*, Indonesia’s other main socio-religious organization, still views itself as the custodian of *Masyumi*’s modernist Islamic legacy. In counterpoint to the political representative ambitions and social mission of traditionalist and modernist responses, a much more radical and militant divergence manifested itself. A divergence that gained traction in the large networks of revolutionary Islamic militias that formed around *Darul Islam* (DI–Abode of Islam) and *Tentara Islam Indonesia* (TII -Indonesian Islamic Army) in the context of the Indonesian National Revolution and the fight against Dutch colonial rule. As Quinton Temby notes, this latter split is in many ways a seedbed of contemporary militant offshoots in Indonesia, especially for groups like *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI–Islamic Community).[8]

This contingent historical experience is important for explanatory purposes because often a recourse to violent militancy rests on questions of identity—a point emphasized by Colombijn and Lindblad through their use of the historical concept of ‘reservoirs of violence’ for explaining conflict in Indonesia.[9] During the struggle against the Dutch, various groups had built up ‘reservoirs of violence’ (arms, training, repertoires, loyalties, supply routes and networks) at the same time as developing different ‘imagined decolonizations’. If we think about the roots of violence after World War Two across Indonesia, it was often conflict over how to define postcolonial identities and in response to the exclusionary injustices of nation-state building. That is to say, certain group identities often forged and crystallized in opposition to the emergence of the modern nation-state and its coercive/exclusionary practices. This fuelled certain demands for autonomy and sometimes precipitated violent action. Significantly, ‘reservoirs of violence’ can persist across time and, whilst not a direct causal catalyst of violence, they can pattern action when it arises. In fact, many of the contemporary militant groups in Indonesia in some ways trace an insurgency connection back to the formation, structures, ‘repertoires of violence’ and visions of these anti-colonial militias.

To elaborate, the rise of Sukarno’s secular nationalism signaled major restrictions on radical Islamic movements in Indonesia and precipitated a host of unintended consequences. Sukarno banned DI and TII in the aftermath of independence but under the leadership of S.M. Kartosuwiryo (*pak Imam*), the *Darul Islam* secessionist rebellion and violent insurgency for the establishment of *Negara Islam Indonesia* (NII–Indonesian Islamic State) continued in places such as West Java, South Sulawesi, Aceh and South Kalimantan

from 1949 to 1962.[10] For NII, “Islam was the foundation and legal basis of the Islamic State of Indonesia, the Koran and tradition constituting the highest authorities.”[11] After a bloody campaign by the Indonesian military, Kartosuwiryo was eventually captured and executed in September 1962.[12] Nonetheless, Kartosuwiryo proclaiming himself imam of *Negara Islam Indonesia* (NII–Indonesian Islamic State) on 7th August 1949 created a powerful alternative ‘imagined decolonization’; an alternate ‘myth of nationhood’. To use Benedict Anderson’s [13] terminology, it constituted a different ‘imagined community’ to the unitary *Pancasila* state envisioned by the secular nationalists. It should also be noted that many ulama, especially those from *Nahdlatul Ulama*, opposed Kartosuwiryo’s vision and insurgency efforts.

As Temby contends *Darul Islam* is not so much a ‘movement’ as a community that perpetuates and reconstitutes itself by looking-back to Kartosuwiryo and who ‘imagine’ themselves as members of *Negara Islam Indonesia*. That is, they view themselves as a ‘nation’ contiguous with the state proclaimed by Kartosuwiryo in 1949. By drawing on the work of Anderson, this is the idea that people who perceive themselves as part of a ‘community’ ultimately imagine it. As such, in the Indonesian context, the ‘nation’ of *Darul Islam* is largely mobilized around a socio-political construct that rests upon a process of invention and re-invention of Kartosuwiryo’s legacy. Adopting this perspective sheds some interesting light on the reproductive dynamics of contemporary militancy in Indonesia. If we view contemporary militancy in Indonesia in significant respects as part of a wider reiterative process and pattern of violence associated with attempts to (re)constitute *Negara Islam Indonesia* across space and time, it makes seemingly sporadic, periodic and episodic fluctuations in militancy more intelligible. Moreover, social movement theory brings some clarity to the enduring symbolic power and mobilizing potential of Kartosuwiryo’s legacy and the force of his alternative ‘imagined decolonization’. According to della Porta and Diani, “the more intense one’s socialization into a particular vision of the world, the stronger the impetus to act.”[14]

In the Indonesian context, although the militias and communities supporting the establishment of *Negara Islam Indonesia* fell into disarray after Sukarno’s concerted military campaign, Kartosuwiryo’s idea, his legacy, the memories, ‘reservoirs of violence’ and loyalties of those times did not fade completely. In fact, they continue to provide powerful contextual narratives and ideational resources. This constitutes the substance of perception for a temporally and spatially dislocated ‘imagined community’ of sporadic groupings to re-coalesce in militancy and action around a resiliently ‘powerful myth’ and ‘imagined’ objective.

In other words, the formation and structures of militia’s that emerged in the context of the anti-colonial struggle and mobilized to action by the idea of *Negara Islam Indonesia* provide a touchstone, no matter how tenuous, for several contemporary militant Islamist offshoot in Indonesia. The roots of *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI–Islamic Community), *Ring Banten*, *Abu Bakar Battalion*, *Abu Umar Network*, and *Angkatan Mujahidin Islam Nusantara* (AMIN–Nusantara Islamic Jihad Forces) all trace a link and in some sense a nebulous feeling of loyalty, kinship, connection and belonging to the ‘imagined community’ of *Darul Islam* and the vision of *Negara Islam Indonesia*. A bit like gravity, you can’t see it but it exerts a decisive pull nonetheless.

Moving our analysis of conditioning factors forward, we can also see by the early 1970s a wider international context interacting with localized developments. The rising influence of Saudi Arabian and Gulf petro-dollars start to play a more significant role and strengthens ties through substantial aid and support for Muslim groups in Indonesia.[15] Alongside scholarships for *dakwah* activities promoting Wahhabist teachings, this largesse helps nurture and underpin the growth of a neo-fundamentalist Salafi movement both directly or indirectly. Moreover, the dissemination of radical teachings was facilitated in many instances by *hadhrami* (Indonesians of Middle Eastern descent) of which Abdullah Sungkar is a notable example.[16]

In fact, even under the repressive grip of Suharto, subterranean allegiances to the idea of *Negara Islam Indonesia* continued and the latent threat of militancy would occasionally flare. For instance, the activities of the relatively short-lived Komando Jihad (another offshoot of DI) in the 1970s and early 1980s posed a threat to Suharto's New Order. The same was true for the Imron Group which took inspiration from the 1979 Iranian revolution and was involved in the Bandung police post incident and the hijacking of a Garuda DC-9 plane in 1981. Other flare ups included the Tanjung Priok massacre in 1984, the bombing of Borobudur in 1985 and the Lampung incident in 1987.[17]

The interaction with a wider international context also plays a significant role when a coterie of combat hardened new arrivals and returnees who had fought with the mujahidin in Afghanistan in the late 1980s go on to provide influential tutelage to aspiring local militants and jihadists.[18] For instance, Fathur Rahman al-Ghozi and Nasir Abbas trained alongside Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members from the Philippines at Afghanistan Mujahidin Military Academy at Camp Saddah. This camp on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border was operated by *Tanzim Ittihad-e-Islamy Afghanistan* under the command of one Abu Sayyaf. On their return, the ties the likes of Fathur Rahman al-Ghozi and Nasir Abbas had made with MILF leaders and the Abu Sayyaf network in Mindanao, Philippines would be an important precursor to militant activities in Indonesia. Many aspiring local militants and jihadists also drew succor from their links back to *Pesantren Al-Mukmin* (aka *Pondok Ngruki*) founded by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir and Abdullah Sungkar in 1972. It is well-documented that Hambali, al-Ghozi, Ali Imron, Amrozi, Huda bin Abdul Haq (Ali Gufon/Mukhlas) Joni Hedrawan (Idris) and Dulmatin all had connections to *Pondok Ngruki*.

Given these manifold conditioning factors and the destabilizing events of the Asian financial crisis of 1997, it is of little surprise that conducive conditions existed for Islamist extremism and paramilitary groups to prosper in the economic instability and political uncertainty of the immediate post-Suharto period.[19] The practice of turning of a blind eye or not following up investigations by sympathetic hardline 'green' factions in the National Police Force (POLRI) and Armed Forces (TNI) alongside endemic corruption also facilitated the situation.[20]

Militant Groups, Jemaah Islamiyah, Fragmentation and Progeny

Many militant Islamist groups in Indonesia are typically factional in character and retain some sort of direct or indirect link to larger hardline organizations.[21] It is estimated that 15 to 20 percent of all Saudi charity dollars sent to Indonesia end up one way or another in the hands of 'suspect' groups.[22] Allegations also abound about links between *komite aksi penanggulangan akibat krisis* (KOMPAK – Action Committee for Crisis Response) set up in Central Sulawesi in 1988 to help victims of flood, disaster and conflict and the indirect channelling of funds to militant groups.[23]

The following is in no way an exhaustive list but gives us some indication of the most visible groupings. For example, although nominally disbanded since 2002 after its involvement in inter-communal violence in the Maluku and Papua, *Laskar Jihad* (LJ–Militia of the Holy War) was largely viewed as a militant offshoot emerging from links to *Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* (FKAWJ–Forum for Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet). Despite denials, suspicion persists that the erstwhile LJ also enjoyed indirect links with orthodox Islamic organizations, namely, *Dewan dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (DDII – Islamic Propagation Council of Indonesia) and *Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas dengan dunia Islam* (KISDI – Indonesian Committee for Solidarity of the Islamic World).[24] In the case of its militant activities in the Maluku region, support and training also came from sympathetic "green" factions in the armed forces, in particular from Kopassus.[25] LJ always publicly denied any links with *al-Qaeda* and

focused firmly on domestic concerns, making a reemergence of its 'repertoires violence' not beyond the realms of possibility if the right set of domestic circumstances arose. Similar to a certain extent, *Laskar Pembela Islam* (LPI–Defenders of Islam Army) operates as the paramilitary wing of the hard-line vigilante organization *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI–Islamic Defenders Front) with very much a domestic issues focus and tacit support from certain sections of the military and the police forces.[26] Somewhat differently, *Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia* (Indonesian Mujahidin Militia) acts as an umbrella term for largely anti-statist mujahidin groups not associated with Laskar Jihad. These include *Mujahidin KOMPAK*, *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI–Indonesian Mujahidin Assembly) and the now disbanded Sulawesi based vigilantes *Laskar Jundullah* (Army of God or God's Soldiers). Interestingly, when MMI, FPI and AMIN led renewed recruitment attempts in Aceh after the 2004 tsunami under the guise of providing humanitarian aid and *dakwah*, they met with little community support.[27] Other organizations with links to militant vigilante groups include *Forum Umat Islam* (FUI–the Islamic People's Forum), *Forum Komunikasi Muslim Indonesia* (Forkami–the Indonesian Muslim Communication Forum), *Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI–Party of Liberation–Indonesia) and *Gerakan Islam Reformis* (Garis–the Islamic Reformist Movement).

As we can see, militant Islamist groups across Indonesia are numerous and a pretty mixed bag. Given the myriad different groupings operating in Indonesia an overall assessment of them remains difficult. Nonetheless, examining the workings of Indonesia's CTP in response to one of its key militant threats, namely *Jemaah Islamiyah*, is still instructive.

As mentioned, networks like *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI) are not new in Indonesia. JI, *Ring Banten*, *Abu Bakar Battalion*; *Abu Umar Network*, and *Angkatan Mujahidin Islam Nusantara* all trace links and draw succour from *Darul Islam*. Yet, the threat posed by networks like JI only really entered public consciousness in the early 2000s, due to a rising tide of concern about new globally networked terrorism.[28] Established militant extremist networks like JI could feed into narrative discourses that allowed them to (re-)present themselves as a regional franchise of al-Qaeda with links across Southeast Asia. JI was always much more than a mere propaganda vehicle for al-Qaeda. On a discursive level, by allying with a new set of pan-regional partners who envisioned *darul Islam nusantara* (an archipelagic Islamic state), JI was able to adopt a convenient piece of fear-inducing propaganda in the pursuit of its long held objective of *Negara Islam Indonesia*. JI's deeper roots and objectives in Indonesia facilitated its ability to conduct *jihadist* operations and meant it posed a very real security threat to the Indonesian authorities. For instance, the Christmas Eve bombings in 2000 in Medan, Northern Sumatra and Batam Island; the 2002 bombings in Bali and Sulawesi; the 2003 Jakarta JW Marriott Hotel bombing; the 2004 suicide bombings at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta and the 2005 Bali restaurant bombings all bore a substantial JI stamp. The Marriott and Ritz Carlton bombings in Jakarta in 2009 were also linked to the work of a JI splinter group, probably *Tanzim Qaedat al-Jihad* formerly led by the now deceased Noordin M. Top.[29]

A major goal of Indonesia's CTP has been diminishing and fragmenting this threat strategically. Its success is closely aligned to the inroads made by Indonesia's US/Australian backed elite counter-terrorism squad, *Detasemen Khusus 88* (Special Detachment 88 — more commonly known as *Densus 88*). *Densus 88* formed in 2003 in the aftermath of the 2002 Bali bombings with economic aid incentives and logistical assistance from the US Department of State's Anti-Terrorist Assistance program and from the Australian government. Along with the TNI and POLRI, they received large amounts of equipment, technical support and training to enhance the country's threat reduction capacity. This even included the construction of multimillion-dollar training facility partly funded by Australia. In fact, the last decade has brought Indonesia and Australia (an important regional partner of the US) closer together in making inroads against the perceived extremist threat. The Australian government also committed AUD\$36.8million over 5 years in cooperation with the

Indonesian government to establish the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) in 2004. Based at Indonesian National Police Academy (AKPOL) in Semarang, this bilateral initiative provides a joint police training program for combatting terrorism.

As a result *Densus 88* has managed to cut a swathe through JI's operational capacity over the last decade. [30] It is responsible for the incarceration or death of many of JI's leading figures as well as other Islamist militants.[31] An estimated 700 militant suspects have been arrested and around another 60 killed by the squad. In fact, over the last decade, all the major suspects in the 2002 Bali bombing have either been imprisoned, executed or killed.[32] For example, former terror mastermind Riduan Isamuddin (Hambali), a key link between JI and al-Qaeda is now languishing in Guantanamo Bay. In 2005, *Densus 88* killed the Malaysian Dr. Azahari bin Husin, one of the alleged technical masterminds behind the 2002 Bali bombings. In 2008, the two brothers Huda bin Abdul Haq (Ali Gufron/Mukhlas), Ali Amrozi bin Haji Nurhasyim (Amrozi) along with Imam Samudra were executed by firing squad on the prison island of Nusa Kambangan for their role in the 2002 Bali Bombings. The same year saw the South Jakarta District Court rule that JI was an illegal organization. This public judicial unmasking of its activities brought JI out of the shadows. It severely dented JI's ability to infiltrate communities and thrive as a *tanzim siri* (secret organization). In 2009 *Densus 88* also killed Azahari's close partner and 'money man' Noordin M. Top. Dulmatin (a leading member of JI) was shot in 2010. Furthermore the radical cleric and JI *emir* (spiritual head) Abu Bakar Ba'asyir received a 15 year sentence in 2011 for his attempts to set up and support jihadi training camps in Aceh. In the same year, Abu Umar and six alleged members of his group were arrested on suspicion of planning to bomb the Singapore embassy in Jakarta. In 2012, Umar 'the demolition man' Patek was also sentenced to 20 years in jail after his capture and extradition from Pakistan.

Clearly, the shape, scope and character of Indonesia's militant Islamist '*terror-scape*' has been altered since the 2002 Bali Bombings. Shifts in leadership, the removal of key figures, ideological divisions, fragmentation and changing pathways to militancy have all played a part in re-orientating the scheme of things. Nonetheless, despite the 'hard tactic' effectiveness of *Densus 88* in degrading JI's organizational and operational capacity, investigation reveals that JI members have always been bound as much by kinship, marriage, schooling, training camps and mutual business relationships as by structured organizational bonds.

Operational diminution, fragmentation and loss of leadership does not mean JI has simply disappeared. It may have lost much of its coordinating leadership and strategic threat but its strength never wholly resided in a coherent organizational structure. Indeed, flux, mutation and realignment are as much a part of JI's DNA matrix as fixed organisational structure and hierarchy. Differences in attitude and ideology also contribute to more centrifugal than centripetal tendencies—something exacerbated by weak overall leadership.[33] Since the death of the charismatic Abdullah Sungkar in 1999, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir made for a relatively unconvincing figurehead, having never really possessed the necessary strategic or coordination skills to be a major unifying force of Indonesia's militant Islamists. This lack of collective solidarity is also related to the fact that while there may be broad agreement on the idea of an Islamist state in Indonesia, thinking on the method and approach of achieving that goal varies widely, especially in relation to the extent of using violent and non-violent means. For instance, when Dulmatin (now deceased) returned from training in Mindanao he questioned the effectiveness of suicide bombing as an operational tactic and became a strong advocate of a more coordinated coalition between the activities of organizations (*lintas tanzim*) and advocated focusing on longer-term strategic goals. He held that fostering community support for their aims would help to establish secure bases across different regions. Part of this involved enforcing *shari'a* through *jihad* and promoting the 'correct' form of Islam by means of *dakwah*. These bases would then in turn act as focal points to further

consolidate the radical *Salafi* jihadist insurgent message and project. This has brought about a shift from indiscriminate terror to more persistent insurgent activities.

A renewed emphasis on study circles and *pengajian* (teaching in certain areas) led by clerics, some of whom promote non-violent *dakwah* (Islam propagation) while others advocate violent jihad has allowed JI and some of its more recent splinters like the Abu Bakar Ba'asyir inspired *Jama'ah Ansharut Tauhid* (JAT-Partisans of the oneness of God) to gain purchase in areas with long histories of insurgency and localized intra-communal conflict. Parts of Indonesia and certain 'imagined communities' provide deeply embedded narrative structures of meaning upon which militant *Salafi* jihadist discourses can provisionally engraft. The situation is complicated further by the adjacent long running separatist conflict led by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao in the Southern Philippines. For instance, in 1996 Abdullah Sungkar, through his close links with then MILF leader Salamat Hasyim, moved JI's main training to Mindanao and built Camp Hudaibiyah on land within MILF's larger Camp Abu Bakar complex.[34] Although a tentative peace deal has been brokered in Mindanao recently, it is still a staging post for training camps and trafficking routes; a surrogate 'reservoir of violence' so to speak. This means that ideas, arms and personnel can still channel up and down from Mindanao, often facilitated by the MILF and the likes of the Abu Sayyaf network, reaching out through a chain of islands across the Celebes Sea and into places like Sulawesi and the Maluku.

Evidence suggests that the militant dynamics and reproductive fluctuations of the current period strongly reflect a combination of the *Darul Islam* thesis put forward by Temby and the work on the roots of violence in Indonesia by Colombijn and Linblad. In fact, it is probably more accurate to describe JI as a loose divergent network of groups. A composite 'imagined community' who draw on specific imaginings, structures of meaning and reservoirs of violence. These temporally and spatially dislocated sporadic militant groupings, each one made up of like-minded extremists, (re-) coalesce around a resiliently 'powerful myth' and 'imagined' objective in opposition to the Indonesian Republic.

Between Punitive Action and Preventive Persuasion?

As noted, Indonesia's CTP may have made inroads in reducing the country's strategic terror threat but at the same time, the state agencies involved in implementing it have also been subject to some harsh criticism. [35] This places increased pressure on an already friable rule of law. Accusations abound both domestically and internationally of human rights abuses. They usually concern the activities and operating procedures of *Densus 88* and range from extra-judicial killings, arbitrary detentions and torture allegations to a worrying lack of transparency and accountability. In fact, given the militant group dynamics and their fluctuating reproductive qualities highlighted in this article, methods used to degrade Indonesia's terror threat may 'blowback', especially as groups fragment and switch tactics to more localized retaliatory responses.

Indonesian authorities do recognize that exclusive reliance on excessive tactical assaults and incarceration (a punitive 'hard approach') in dealing with militant Islamist groups will be counterproductive in the long run. [36] Research shows that prisons also act as incubators for extremism by way of radicalization, training and recruitment.[37] Although critics complain of ex-President's Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's overly tentative handling of terror issues, there has been some success, albeit limited, to balance 'hard' and 'soft' approaches in dealing with the threat of radicalization and militancy.[38] The thinking is that getting militants to turn away from violence and terrorism and reclaiming them for society is crucial for lasting containment.[39] If you can convince imprisoned militants to renounce violence and sever previous ties rather than incarcerating them indefinitely, this is viewed as a more effective long-term strategy. The goal is to get militants to turn

away from violence and terrorism and reclaim them for society not just for the sake of security containment but also for restoring societal harmony.

This awareness stems largely from a localized understanding of the problem. Culturally speaking, resorting to excessive callousness or coercion are not signs of power; in fact, it is more likely to undermine one's legitimacy as it is seen as disharmonious. Rather, community support and harmony is better served through displays of benevolence and magnanimity. This also fuses with a particularly important part of Islamic teaching in Indonesia: the acknowledgement of repentance (*tobat*). In short, *tobat* places an emphasis on allowing a person the right to change themselves while at the same time also putting an obligation on society to accept those changes. When terrorists repent, society then reciprocates by accepting the changed behaviour.

Significantly, it is this notion of repentance that helps inform and shape many of the specifically localized approaches to dealing with the spectre of militancy in Indonesia. In fact, the utility of military force diminishes disproportionately if it runs too high a risk of stoking community unrest. As mentioned, given the networked ties that bind members of the extremist community, persistent punitive dealings have major limitations. Harsh treatment and indefinite incarceration alone can simply fuel frustration, resentment and the anger of inmates and, by extension, their immediate and extended families towards the Indonesian state and wider society.

If we accept that group identities often forge and crystallize in opposition to the state and its coercive/exclusionary practices and secondly, that the periodic and episodic fluctuations of militancy in Indonesia are part of a wider reiterative process and pattern of violence associated with attempts to reconstitute *Negara Islam Indonesia* across space and time. Then the more violent the state's response, the more it risks merely perpetuating a 'ghettoized' sub-culture of hate and alienation towards itself. The danger being that the more intense this oppositional socialization of a ghettoized vision of the world becomes, the stronger the impetus to act out its realization through violent means.

Putting issues of under-resourcing and ad-hoc institutionalisation aside for a moment, Indonesia's localized understanding of its own militant problem has brought about a 'smart' approach of disengagement and de-radicalisation rather than just an exclusive reliance on a traditional 'hard' approach of tactical assaults, punishment and detention.[40] Although limited and not as successful as the approach of the authorities in Singapore, the Indonesian 'soft' approach angle involves breaking the nexus of radicalisation through persuasion and alternatives. Operationalizing this approach in practice has included the organisation of prayer sessions by members of *Densus 88* in conjunction with militant detainees as a sign of respect and opportunity to atone for past deeds. Former *Densus 88* chief, Brigadier General Surya Dharma was a prime mover in promoting the idea of treating someone fairly and give them a second chance if they genuinely seek to repent (*bertobat*). Rather than marginalizing imprisoned militants further, the rationale goes that if you can get them to recognize the destructive consequences of their actions, then there is the possibility of opening a path to a credible alternative or second chance. This allows them an opportunity to rediscover a different Islamic meaning in their lives, a discursive one that disconnects them from the destructive cycle of extreme thinking, mobilisation and violence.[41]

There have also been efforts to encourage inmates to speak out about their experiences as a warning to others and using their influence over other inmates to cooperate with authorities. For instance, by publishing and talking about his experiences ex-JI commander Mohammed Nasir Bin Abbas provided counsel on how to 'de-program' extremist mind-sets especially amongst Indonesian youth.[42] Ex-JI member Ali Imron (brother of Amrozi) also renounced his past mistakes by publishing a book and tapes and publicly advocating

against terrorism. He and others have worked closely with the authorities and different non-state actors (i.e. socio-religious organisations) in their de-radicalisation efforts with militant detainees. These initiatives have also run in conjunction with advertising campaigns on the streets and through the media promoting an anti-jihadist message. The real goal in all of this is to provide these people with a 'way-back'.

Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT–The National Counterterrorism Agency set up 5 years ago to coordinate Indonesia's CTP) has also taken steps to establish a multi-institutional de-radicalization program in co-operation with religious groups, clerics, NGOs, universities and schools. This co-operative initiative includes the two largest national Islamic organizations *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah* along with the likes of Al-Hikam College, the Islamic State University of Surakarta and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. BNPT also runs the newly constructed \$144.2 million Indonesian Peace and Security Centre (IPSC) in Sentul, West Java which now serves as a de-radicalization and rehabilitation facility for some of Indonesia's most hardened convicted terrorists. The goal is to get militants to turn away from violence and terrorism and reclaim them for society not just for the sake of security containment but also to strengthen societal harmony. [43]

Transforming the attitudes and conditions that incubate intolerance and lead it to spill over into home-grown forms of violence and terror may form a part of Indonesia's approach, but there remains a fine line between too little interference and actively dealing with militant threats. Moreover, tackling the 'grey area' between radicalism and outright terrorist activity is an issue fraught with difficulties in Indonesia. An unwillingness of authorities to tackle effectively this 'grey area' or intervene for whatever political reasons could have unintended consequence. For example, radical organizations like *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI–Islamic Defenders Front) may be slowly realizing that politics and bombs do not mix. Yet violent intimidation of so-called 'heretics' and 'deviants' by its associated 'thugs' or the local mobs they help incite still continues largely unabated.[44] Recently, the SETARA Institute reported 264 attacks on religious minorities in 2012, up from 244 in 2011 and 216 and 2010 with local Ahmadiyya, Baha'i, Christian or Shi'a minorities the main targets. [45] Prosecutions do occur but they are all too infrequent and the outcome is usually lenient.[46]

Ongoing operational disagreement and tension between POLRI and the TNI over the way to deal with the problem does little to alleviate the situation. The TNI's Strategic Intelligence Agency (BAIS) favours monitoring radical groups rather than banning them outright. They fear that wholesale bans can force groups underground and make tracking their activities even more difficult. In contrast, POLRI's Home Security Intelligence Agency (BIK) has sought to have organizations such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI) outlawed for its activities.

Conclusion

On balance, indicators point in the direction of a diminished macro-threat environment and a more manageable strategic security situation in Indonesia. The strategic threat may have been reduced and contained but concerns about a growing atmosphere of intolerance going unchecked cannot simply be ignored, especially given the complex and deeply rooted types of insecurity that exist in Indonesia.

Although a splintered *jihadist* community appears limited in its ability to elicit broad-based popular support for its violent tactics, there are also multiple recruitment paths into radicalization and Islamist militancy whether it be spiritual, intellectual or kinship based. Continued commitment to a nuanced response is a priority in Indonesia if it is to yield meaningful containment. As this article has demonstrated militancy in Indonesia has the ability to reproduce, metastasize and re-coalesce anew in 'old' ways. These temporally and spatially dislocated militant groupings can (re-) coalesce around resiliently 'powerful myths' and 'imagined'

objectives in opposition to the Indonesian Republic. For example, *Densus 88* arrested 11 suspects accused of planning attacks on several high-profile targets in 2012. They were from a relatively new home-grown splinter group, *Hasmi* (the Sunni Movement for Indonesian Society). Even more recently, police arrested several terror suspects supposedly led by the Abu Hanifah cell.[47] The latter also has links to the Abu Omar network that operated in Surakarta and Cirebon, West Java. They were allegedly plotting attacks against the Myanmar Embassy in Jakarta and against several US targets in Java in response to the persecution of Rohingya in Myanmar.[48] If we factor in a lack of coordinated management of radical organizations, lax money transfer regulations[49] and porous, notoriously difficult to patrol borders, conditions for incubating militancy and reproducing home-grown forms of violence remain.

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Notes

- [1] See S.U. Hartman (2013). *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah*. trans. Dave McRae. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (Indonesian version: S.U. Hartman (2011). *NII sampai Ji: Salafy Jihadisme di Indonesia*. Depok: Komunitas Bambu); C. Van Dijk (1980). *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- [2] See J. Bertrand (2004). *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*. Cambridge: University Press; J.S. Davidson (2009). *From Rebellion to Riots: Collective Violence on Indonesian Borneo*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- [3] On 12th October 2002, in the aftermath of the Bali Bombings, then President Megawati Soekarnoputri issued two PERPU (Government Regulation In-Lieu of Law — *Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang*) No. 1/2002 on the eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism and No.2/2002 on Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism in relation to the bomb explosion incident in Bali. In April 2003, Indonesia introduced new anti-terrorism legislation (Law No 15/2003) with a set of wide-ranging measures designed to combat terrorist threats. These included incarceration provisions ranging from a minimum of three years to life sentences. It also allowed for the death penalty in extreme cases. It gave government agencies the authority to detain and investigate suspected terrorists for three days, based on initial intelligence information; a maximum of seven days based on sufficient evidence; freeze suspected bank accounts; open and examine mail and intercept telephone and other communications of suspects for a period of sixty days at a time. See The Indonesian Laws Information Centre, 'Undang Undang No. 15/2003 tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terrorisme. (No. 15/2003 on the Elimination of Terrorism)' <http://www.wirantaprawira.net/law/>.
- [4] P.J. Carnegie (2013). "Is militant Islamism a busted flush in Indonesia?" *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, p.16.
- [5] J. C. Santosa (1996). *Modernization, utopia and the rise of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia*. Graduate School. Boston: Boston University.
- [6] P.J. Carnegie (2010). *The Road from Authoritarianism to Democratization in Indonesia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 83.
- [7] M. van Bruinessen (2002). "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia," *South East Asia Research*, Vol. 10, Issue 2, p. 125.
- [8] Q. Temby (2010). "Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah," *Indonesia*, April, Vol. 89, pp. 1-36.
- [9] F. Colombijn and T. Lindblad (Eds.) (2002) *Roots of Violence in Indonesia*. Leiden: KITLV.
- [10] C. Formichi (2010). "Pan-Islam and Religious Nationalism: The Case of Kartosuwiryo and Negara Islam Indonesia." *Indonesia*. October Vol. 90, pp. 125-146.
- [11] C. van Dijk (1980). *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 93.
- [12] H. Dengel (1995). *Darul Islam dan Kartosuwirjo: Langkah Perwujudan Angan-Angan yang Gagal* Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan.
- [13] B. Anderson (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections of the origins and spread of nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.

- [14] D. della Porta and M. Diani. (1999). *Social Movements: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. p. 62.
- [15] C. Thayer (2008). "Radical Islam and political terrorism in Southeast Asia," in Terence Chong, (Ed.), *Globalization and its counter-forces in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp. 260-264.
- [16] A.I. Abushouk and H. A. Ibrahim. (2009). *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?* Leiden: Brill, pp. 1-15.
- [17] J.H. McGlynn, O. Mutuloh, S. Charle, J. Hadler, B. Bujono, M. Glade-Agusta & G. Suhartono (Eds.) (2005). *Indonesia in the Soeharto Years: Issues, Incidents and Images*. Jakarta: Lontar Foundation.
- [18] S.U. Hartman (2013). *The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jema'ah Islamiyah*. trans. Dave McRae. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; N. Abbas (2011). *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah: A Former Member's True Story*, trans. Khalid Saifullah. Jakarta: Graha Grafindo.
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- [20] B. Bandoro (2002). "War against Terror: Lessons from Indonesia." *Indonesian Quarterly*, Vol. 30, Issue 3, pp. 234-236; P.J. Carnegie (2010). *The Road from Authoritarianism to Democratization in Indonesia*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 90-91; J. Roosa (2003). "Brawling, bombing and backing: The Security Forces as a source of insecurity." *Inside Indonesia*. 73, pp. 10-11; S. Atkins (2004). "Laskar Jihad (Militia of the Holy War), Indonesia", in: *Encyclopedia of Modern Worldwide Extremists and Extremist Groups*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, p. 174; *Jakarta Post* (2011). "Police deny relations with FPI following Wikileaks Release", Jakarta, September 4.
- [21] P.J. Carnegie (2008). Political Islam and Democracy in Indonesia. *Asian Social Science*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, pp. 5.
- [22] C.S. Bond (2005). "Indonesia and the changing front in the War on Terrorism," Lecture, April 28, Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.
- [23] International Crisis Group (ICG) (2004). Indonesia Backgrounder: Jihad in Central Sulawesi, *International Crisis Group*, Asia Report No. 74 Jakarta/Brussels Feb 3, pp. 1-42. Little or no accountability and the lack of discernible paper trails make tracing and then preventing the diversion of donations away from relief operations in to the hands of militants a hard task.
- [24] DDII and KISDI are both major promoters of 'Islamization from below' in Indonesia and active in propagating translated Muslim Brotherhood texts and Salafist ideas through *pesantren*, mosques and on university campuses. They receive substantial funding from the Middle East.
- [25] N. Hasan (2002). "Faith and Politics: The rise of Laskar Jihad in the era of transition in Indonesia." *Indonesian Quarterly*, Vol. 73, Issue 2, pp. 4-18.
- [26] International Crisis Group (ICG) (2010). "Indonesia: 'Christianization' and intolerance." *International Crisis Group*, Asia Briefing No. 114, Jakarta/ Brussels, November 24, p. 17. Top ranking officials have all appeared at FPI events in Jakarta that sends a less than mixed message about official attitudes to FPI methods for maintaining so-called 'law and order'.
- [27] International Crisis Group (ICG) (2010). "Indonesia: Jihadi surprise in Aceh." *International Crisis Group*, Asia Report No. 189, 20 April, Jakarta/Brussels, pp. 1-27.
- [28] Z. Abuza (2005), *Al Qaeda comes to Southeast Asia*, in Paul J. Smith (Ed.), *Terrorism and violence in Southeast Asia: Transnational challenges to states and regional stability*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, pp. 31-61.
- [29] P.J. Carnegie (2013). "Is militant Islamism a busted flush in Indonesia?" *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, p. 15.
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- [39] S.B. Yudhoyono (2005). “Terrorism: A New Fight for ASEAN”, Keynote Speech at the 5th ASEAN Chiefs of Police Conference (ASEANAPOL), Denpasar, Bali 17th May.
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- [41] P.J. Carnegie (2013). “Is militant Islamism a busted flush in Indonesia?” *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, p.17.
- [42] See N. Abbas (2011). *Inside Jamaah Islamiyah: A Former Member’s True Story*, trans. Khalid Saifullah. Jakarta: Graha Grafindo.
- [43] P.J. Carnegie (2013). “Is militant Islamism a busted flush in Indonesia?” *Journal of Terrorism Research*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp.17 & 21.
- [44] Having said this, FPI’s chairman and founder, Habib Muhammad Riziek Syihab, did receive a 1.5 year jail term in 2008 for inciting attacks against a gathering held by the National Alliance for Freedom of Religion and Belief in Jakarta that injured seventy demonstrators.
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- [47] N. Afrida and R. Pramudatama (2012). “After raids, focus on Hasmi group and terror links,” *Jakarta Post*, Jakarta, October 29.
- [48] I. Parlina (2013). “Bomb plot linked to known cells.” *Jakarta Post*, Jakarta, May 4.
- [49] Whether the implementation of *Law No. 9/2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Terrorism Financing* will help stem matters is still an open question.