

Discuss the emergence, evolution and future prospects of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

Background:

This was the final essay in my Bachelor of Science Degree majoring in Emergency Management with CSU. Terrorism in SE Asia in the early part of the 2,000's affected many Australian families – with frequent travel to the railway in Asia its good to know some history of this group and what they are capable of. For the record I do not support any of JI's practices and beliefs – my paper is an academic view of the group; I hope that translates through this document.

Introduction

This paper will discuss three key areas of JI - firstly the emergence of the organisation. Through the transparency of the Inverse Triangle Model (similar to the facets of Hezbollah and Hamas) they have adapted a group that is splintering into legitimate areas for expansion purposes.

Through their political party and numerous diplomatic victories to their publishing arm that spreads the JI gospel to the masses via social media and traditional methods like magazines. Establishing themselves as a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) has been a masterstroke for the 'business' – getting into areas of disaster enables the fanatical to preach to the vulnerable – recruiting and educating whilst providing response and recovery – they have taken Emergency Management to a new level.

Evolution of the group will discuss the historical beginnings and some of the chief architects of the movement such as Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. It will also highlight one of the main blueprints of recruitment and lineage through their boarding schools – preaching to a captive and immature audience.

Future prospects are linked to several documents developed by the above two JI leaders. Establishing a relatively easy way to join the group if you are already an orthodox Muslim is a central premise along with the fluid movement of members across differing cells and countries.

Jemaah's jihadi actions have caught the world's attention in the last 20 years and with that interest came a crackdown; they have reinvented through traditional means which will further burrow them into the fabric of Indonesian and world affairs.

The aim of this paper is to highlight that JI is down but certainly not out and that it has re-focused it's position - to spread its divisional tentacles into new methods of raising funds, members and awareness whilst still harbouring the old premise.

Emergence

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) shows similar Inverse Triangle Model traits as both Hezbollah and Hamas foundations. For example the Majelis Mujahidin is a pseudo political party in Indonesia (similar to Sinn Fein) where Majelis uses the democratic process to heighten their presence with the passing of legislation etc; encouraging heavy orthodox Muslim influence within the legislature. Basically a means to an end by using the democratic process to gain an Islamic state. Successes include:

- Adopting Islamic law in preference to penal law,
- Regulation between the sexes,
- Banning alcohol,
- Forcing Qur'an study,
- Mandating Arabic literacy and
- The enforcement of public servants to wear Islamic dress.

As Hezbollah conducts terrorism against Israeli assets; International groups argue it does have community minded benefits within its arms of social work; JI has adopted a similar model.

“The democratic system is not the Islamic way,” Ba’asyir explained. “It is forbidden. Democracy is based on people, but the state must be based on God’s law – I call it Allahcracy. Islam’s victory can only come through da’wa and jihad, not elections.” (Ba’asyir from Abuza, 2009:5)

From 2002-2009 JI became splintered due to mass arrests following the Bali Bombings and due to some leaders distancing themselves from Al-Qaeda and the subsequent call to arms. Other leaders took more of a religious pathway but others remained firmly in the hold of harming western assets like the JI group responsible for the J.W. Marriot Hotel blast in 2003. Along with the Australian Embassy a year later and in 2005 the suicide bombing in Bali that killed 26 people led by the late Noordin Top who was killed in 2009 in a battle with Police.

“By the mid-2000s, national security efforts had begun to seriously degrade JI’s operational capabilities. Since 2002, governments of Southeast Asia have arrested over 400 suspected terrorists tied to the group, including JI’s operational chief in 2003 and two senior leaders in 2007”. (Stanford University: 2015)

Publishing

Security forces of Indonesia cracked down on JI demolishing the leadership and forcing a re-model of the organisation from within – the early 2000’s model dismantled; so it worked the Inverse Triangle Model to its advantage. One emphasis was on Islamic Outreach or ‘Dakwah’ and its publishing houses – spreading the word in a traditional way through magazines and via the internet. With an office in Yogyakarta its own Press House ‘Wihdah’ publishes conspiracy theories; pressing orthodox Qur’an interpretations and anti-Semitic/American/western philosophy. JI’s multi-media publishing house produces the magazine ‘Risalah Muhahidin’ and is run by the son (Muhammad Jibril) of a JI leader.

KOMPAK

The relief group KOMPAK was formed in late 1998 by the offshoot group Devan Dakwah Islam Organisation basically to infiltrate areas requiring aid where members can preach JI ideologies to locals in distress. Promoting radical ideas to vulnerable people and providing a veneer of legitimacy to JI, its members and the group as a whole.

Initial aid and assistance was provided in the Kalimantan, Moluccas and Central Sulawesi areas and immediately partnered with the large Non-Government Organisation (NGO): Saudi International Islamic Relief Organisation (SIIRO). Partnering had its benefits where it could receive, manage and distribute international aid; into areas it managed and administered; and in KOMPAK case – only to Muslims. In 2006 however, the United Nations Security Council decreed KOMPAK an affiliate with Al-Qaeda and black-listed the organisation and its offshoot linked with the SIIRO.

“Of the thirteen regional directors of KOMPAK, at least three were top-level Jemaah Islamiyah operatives.” (Abuza, 2009:6)

In Sulawesi JI leader Agus Dwikarna served in three roles:

- a. Leader of the Sulawesi KOMPAK group,
- b. Branch Officer of the SIIRO and
- c. Treasurer of the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia.

Another JI leader named Aris Munandar used KOMPAK and its resources (sourced from legitimate and illegitimate means) to support operations against Christians in the Moluccas and Sulawesi districts and for providing Al-Qaeda support for JI training. Linked to their multi-media arm, KOMPAK also used its resources to create training videos promoting jihad for promotional, fundraising and recruitment purposes.

KOMPAK was disrupted during the crackdown of JI during the last decade in Indonesia. KOMPAK affiliates in Ambon for example steered the Bali II (2005) bombings run by JI Operative Abdullah Sonata who received Saudi funding to the tune of US\$50,000 for terror activities, particularly in the Philippine state of Mindanao. JI members ordered KOMPAK colleagues send ten suicide bombers to the Philippines where Sonata affirms that only three got through.

“Those not completely with him were the enemy, and they too were deserving of death. Any atrocity thus is justifiable and possible.” Grob-Fitzgibbon, 2010: 110)

The Indonesian Government appears to have accepted in recent times the more overt JI due to its established charities – augmenting the notion that it can wean the fanatical and retain the moderates. Hambali – one of the top JI men in Malaysia established one benevolent group known as ‘Perubahan el Hassan’ a conduit for JI campaigns in the Moluccas and to assist with financial aid to the Medical Emergency Relief Charity. This connects to the inverse triangle model like the Hezbollah

paradigm where Lebanon and some western powers tolerate their extreme format, allured by the notion of acceptance in government to promote control.

“...Hezbollah’s use of terrorism has been anything but disorganized or solely Iranian orchestrated.” (Ranstorp, 1994).

Natural Disasters

The 26 December 2004 Sumatran earthquake created the Tsunami that decimated coastal areas and killed over 165,000 Indonesians. In May 2006 a 6.2 magnitude earthquake hit Central Java providing another massive humanitarian crisis for the region killing 6,000 and leaving 1.5 million homeless.¹

With the Indonesian government overwhelmed with events in December 2004 they sought to extract resources from JI’s social networks – it turned to the Majelis Mujahidin Political Party who dispatched 77 volunteers to Banda Aceh; with one official a known suspect in the 2002 Bali Bombings.

Not all of the 77 were involved in the humanitarian crisis and response; many of the group were involved in local religious doctrinarian and there to prevent other NGO’s with ‘other’ spiritual premise ‘getting in before they did’. The lack of discretion by the Majelis to preach and sermonise led the Indonesian military to expel some 19 of them several weeks later.

Involvement in response and recovery for JI was crucial in getting some points on the board with the community. Good press in the media and being able to demote the government’s ability to protect and provide for the masses timely. Getting established in a judicious manner was crucial to counter western influence; being able to lecture to the vulnerable first would be decisive for new recruitment and mass support. With Mosques the central bubble of community relief – obtaining control and command of these religious centres was ideal to spread the JI brand. This is a back-handed way of proselytizing to the masses, without violence, with good press and a premise of helping people in need.

Evolution

Historical beginnings

Jl is a radical Islamic group with roots dating back to the 1950s and 60s primarily from the Darul Islam (DI) movement. Later, the West Javanese of the period attempted to establish a pan-Islamic state in the country of Indonesia establishing smaller communities in order to create a Sharia or Islamic State.

Links with Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir with DI in the 1980s saw those two leaders flee to neighbouring Malaysia in order to escape gaol sentences for radical associations. It was this period they (and others) began to travel to Afghanistan for training and fight the Soviets; grouping with Al-Qaeda forces and trainers for both funding and education.

¹ Abuza, 2009:6

In the 1990's JI transformed and strengthened through training and established bases in other countries including the Philippines; the latter leading to strong links to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Moving back to Indonesia during the Asian Crisis of 1997/8 and the fall of long-term President Suharto from government. During the transition to Indonesian democracy is where JI became prominent in the country towards the late 90's. They became involved in the conflict between Muslims and Christians; by attacking the latter including churches and Clergy – particularly in Lombok, Sumatra and West Java with promotion of their Muslim ideologies.

“The Muslim concept of struggle – jihad – has been employed for centuries in Islamic theories of both personal salvation and political redemption. “Life is faith and struggle,” said Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini, indicating that the notion of fighting is basic to human existence and on a par with religious commitment.” (Juergensmeyer, 2001: 147).

Whilst the Indonesian government tended to overlook and resist external pressure to harangue the JI movement in the pre Bali Bombing era; other governments like Singapore and Malaysia actively policed their own borders of the extremists. As Indonesia has a Muslim majority; perhaps the root lack of action was race related, maybe it was the Asian Financial Crisis coupled with other Suharto related corruption scandals; maybe the influence of the Majelis.

“While no confirmed JI-linked terrorist attack has occurred since 2009, JI remains committed to its long-term strategy to overthrow the Indonesian Government and establish a pan-Islamic state in South-East Asia—through violence if necessary. (Stanford University: 2015)

Early 2000, and JI was extremely active particularly against the west and US targets; potentially related to the early influence of Ba’asyir and his Al-Qaeda origins in Afghanistan. JI by this time seemed to have no issues in attacking crowded places even killing their own kind. Singapore prevented attacks in December 2001 on various diplomatic buildings and a year later the Bali Bombings claimed 202 victims. Ba’asyir has denied involvement in terrorism and even called the Bali Bombings ‘a Brutal Act’.

“Attacking western and U.S. interests may have replaced, if not overtaken, the primary focus on Indonesian Christian targets, as the attacks on a nightclub in Bali in 2002 and on the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in 2004 have demonstrated.” (Golburt, 2002: 2).

Ba’asyir co-founded an Islamic Boarding School in 1971/2 in Central Java with cohort Abdullah Sangkar with many graduates implicated in Islamic/extremist attacks. It has been said the school was a voice for his contrition on the status quo and to heighten his campaign for a strict Sharia State.

“It is difficult not to compare the Assassins of Old Alamut with that small minority of Muslims today who wreak terror upon far greater powers in the name of Allah, and do so with passion and with the promise of paradise in their eyes.” (Nour, 2002:28)

Sungkar the other co-founder of the West Java School established an 'ideological hybrid' of DI who elevated extreme views that promoted the literal clarification of Islam. Opposing any regimes that failed to promote orthodox Islam; he wanted strict religion - his interpretation to spread throughout Indonesia and neighbouring countries. Violence was justified against their own with the belief those who corralled Islam were no better than western or American purveyors of a non-spiritual society through reviled capitalism, political interference and modern culture.

Jl took advantage of lax regional and security law with the ability to create businesses, forge documents; purchase weapons, fundraise and be politically active with the Majelis Mujahidin Political Party. Corruption, weak law enforcement and lax border controls all contributed to an early, snowballing Jl success story. Co-ordination with organised crime, co-operation with Al-Qaeda, quasi Islamic finance groups and money laundering also assisted Jl's growth late last century.

'A comprehensive explanation, however, must also take into account the environment in which the terrorism occurs and address the question of whether broad political, social and economic conditions make terrorism more likely in some contexts than in others.' (Cranshaw, 1981: 100)

What makes Jl a Terrorist Organisation?

Our government within the Criminal Code Division 102 offers for a group to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney General should be satisfied on lay terms that the group is behaving directly or indirectly in the strategy, preparation, nurturing and development of the terrorist Actus Reus – the wrongful act. This is whether or not the act is completed or not.

"By the end of the decade, Jemaah Islamiyah had become an Al-Qaeda affiliate, receiving financial and material support from the group. Several top Jl operatives even received instruction in Afghan training camps." Abuza; 2009:2)

Jl has not invented anything new or unique, it has borrowed many references and models over time including Hezbollah, Hamas, Al-Qaeda and the Assassins to name a few. What makes an individual a terrorist is an interesting question and one that would need a separate paper; basically terrorists are not insane, uneducated, lone wolves, who possess symptoms of psychopathology or have suicidal tendencies – they are quite normal individuals driven by fierce beliefs, socialisation and next level jingoism.

"Eradicating terrorism requires new policies toward non-traditional security threats, including finding solutions to economic, environmental and social problems that extremists manipulate and exploit." (Malone, 2008:8)

Known terrorist responsibilities of Jl include:

- 2002 Bali bombings which killed 202 people,
- 2003 Marriott Hotel bombing, Jakarta, which killed 13 people,

- 2004 Australian Embassy bombing, Jakarta, which killed nine people, &
- 2005 Bali bombing in Jimbaran and Kuta, which killed 23 people.²

“Driven by the need to survive, such groups tend to be small, cohesive, and secretive. The circle of those aware of impending attacks is kept to a minimum to ensure operational security and personnel anonymity.” (Sarma, 2005:166)

Like 11th Century Hasan-I Sabbah of Persia who set out to seek the support of his people to gain power, he lured poor peasants and under-privileged against oppressors and landlords. Having won this support he would then persuade nobility and rulers to resign castles and property or suffer consequences; where diplomacy failed - force, subversion and warfare took its place. Terrorism was utilised to encourage other lords to withdraw resistance. The JI method of gaining political influence via the Majelis Mujahidin and their NGO's demonstrate links to this Persian Hasan even though they are 900 years apart. On the Assassins, Miller from Cambridge University Press said:

“...it proved impossible to contain both regimes and insurgents within the prescribed frameworks each had designed, the theories from above and below filtered their way into the discourses and deeds of the ensuing centuries of political violence.” (Miller, 2012:2).

Future Prospects

Noordin Top penned an 82 page doctrine about how to establish Jihadi cells within a six month period. Couple this with the document Sungkar and Ba'asyir created called Pedoman Umum Perjuangan al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah (PUPJI)³ and you have a melting pot of extreme instruction and guidelines for the future.

“Training is essential to the military character of the JI network. It provides a sense of purpose, expands its capabilities, increases religious fervour and commitment, and produces a new generation of fighters and instructors.” (Golburt, 2004:2)

The doctrine offers a blue-print to topple the state with a radical Islamic alternative via political, covert, and violent methods. The PUPJI outlines the JI struggle as a pseudo Chindit/Guerrilla outfit of clandestine cells in an underground struggle against oppression. Maybe a link by the PUPJI to Carl Von Clausewitz's observations on guerrilla warfare some 200 years earlier where Clausewitz's observed the connection between war and politics and that 'typical' warfare had recently changed with the Napoleonic Wars (1789-1815) to the French Revolution. Typical wars were now being charged by the masses and influenced by non-state actors.

“The advent of the levee en masse not only signalled to him the indissoluble connection between war and politics, but also the rapid obsolescence of old

² Source: <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2012/10/11/factbox-bali-bombers-where-are-they-now>

³ Translates to: The General Guide for the Struggle of Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyah.

(i.e. inter-state) forms of doing battle. Clausewitz was keen to explore the potential of this new phenomenon as a means of armed resistance.” (Kaemph; 2009:133).

Changes to NGO law within Indonesia could greatly affect JI. If Jakarta re-edited law No.8 (1995) on NGOs making it illegal to fundraise by unregistered or deregistered firms; then JI's activities via its 'cloak of philanthropy' would be deemed illegal by Indonesian law. Would this ever occur? Maybe a politician who stood up in the largest Muslim country in the world with great resolution could challenge such a notion but to date this has not occurred.

“Targeting their financial and social networks is essential to the long-term fight against terrorism.” (Abuza; 2009:11)

By taking on the role of supporter and saviour in many cases with its response and recovery efforts in disasters, by providing the social access via magazines and multi-media to the masses – those Muslims who once opposed the violence of JI may now question their former ideals. Maybe this group is not so bad after all with the good they are doing – even if their main principle and premise has not changed one iota.

It is unknown exactly how many members JI has, but in 2007 it was estimated that some 700 to several thousand existed. That number may be the same; it could have increased with the burgeoning social media and outreach; or because of JI's charitable arms. Prison is another breeding ground of frustrated Indonesians looking for a violent and dissident cause; gaoling ring-leaders puts them into another population that can assist with the membership drive.

The future of JI is cemented in many modern forms; social media, charities as mentioned, however its fundamental propagation of militant and xenophobic members will come from its home-grown channels. JI manages around 50 'Pesantren' (Islamic Boarding Schools) where the group can recruit Mujahedeen to forward the group dynamic into the next generation.

“Of course it is a pity that humanity has not yet invented a more peaceful means of progress, but until now every forward step in history has been achieved only after it has been baptized in blood.” (Jensen; 2010:122)

The key to the whole JI movement is the PUPJI document because it spells out the broad details of how you can join the JI brotherhood. So what does it take to join JI and flourish as a member and tick JI boxes?

Firstly you have to be Muslim, secondly you must subscribe to the four 'Salafi' principles that command a fundamentalist approach to radical Islam and the JI foundation. They take an approach that was adopted from Prophet Mahammad's earliest followers including Al-Salaf al-Salih and discard any form of religious innovation. The Salafi principles corner believers into several bands, those who:

- a. consist of members who forsake politics;
- b. others who adopt politics and

- c. others who use Jihadi ways to espouse their fanatical ideology on those who oppose Islam.

Thirdly those who practice a pure form of Islam without perversion or modernisation may join. Lastly those who take a pledge or oath governed by the Emir (the leader of a JI cell) has then ticked the boxes of JI membership. If you have been on the 'life treadmill' of Islam and need that extra 'esprit de corps'⁴ then it will not take much for you to get your membership ticket. This is one of the major strengths of the JI way; making it easy for fanatical recruits to join and prosper.

Furthering the above, a member of JI can approach his Mantiqi (Territory) leader or Wakalah mentor (person an oath was given to) about joining any other cell they have interest in; meaning it is easy to move about with like-minded spirits. In or out of Indonesia, working with Al-Qaeda and splinter cells is permitted because they are on the same pathway; not interfering with the jihadi strategy and mission.

“Human bombs have become an accepted method of political violence in a number of conflicts. Although some examples of suicidal behaviour by ideological extremists can be cited, most incidents have been committed by ethno-national and religious terrorists.” Martin; 2014:130).

The problem free movement of militants, easy access to neighbouring countries, lax border and financial controls and ventures into legitimate charities make JI a pliable and flexible group. Whilst some of their leaders like Hambali, Mukhlis, al-Ghozi, Ba'asyir etc were removed during the crackdown; there are others who can step up via their myriad of connections. JI seems to have followers in many countries through South East Asia to the Middle East – it is still a group highly capable of destructive and lethal action on a grand scale - we have not heard the last of JI.

Conclusion

Majelis Mujahidin is a pseudo political party in Indonesia that has had many victories within the Indonesian legislature. If they can continue to develop this group and translate that into seats of Parliament they can control from within.

Garnering attention via multi-media and social networks is also important in the connected world of the internet. Producing a magazine that espouses the fundamental word very important to subscribers and those clinging to the fringe.

KOMPAK is an organisation that has taken Emergency Management to a new level, the basis of its supposition is there however it is tangled with JI leaders who want to preach the gospel of fundamentalism to vulnerable people. By acting swiftly they can get into regional areas, establish footholds in the community, prey on exposed people for recruiting and criticise the government for their lack of empathy and action. This is a modern way of using funds, charities and logistics to create a solid pathway to the JI movement.

⁴ Military feeling of belonging.

Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir were notable giants of the JI movement, even creating doctrine for members to follow and as a basis for the future. Making it easy to join the group to already devout Muslims through the PUPJI script has also been a masterstroke by the group. Allowing members to move about with other like-minded cells, organisations (like Al-Qaeda) and countries makes members harder to detect, capture and promotes deep-rooted and cross-pollination of the JI theory.

The Indonesian Government should draw a line in the sand and dismantle the whole JI system; they should do the opposite of what the Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese authorities did – rip it all apart and disrupt the whole organisation including KOMPAK; publishing arms, charities and legitimate businesses.

Only then will the inverse triangle model be destroyed and instance of violence and terror reduced to a trickle. The JI group is still there; waiting for opportunities and growing within legitimate means – it would be a major undertaking to disrupt the divisional tentacles – but if they do not – the cycle of violence will no doubt continue.

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