The 'Islamic State' after the Fall of Raqqa: A Continuing Terrorist Threat and Ideological Challenge

The recent territorial losses and defeat of the so-called Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria signify a tactical win in the long-term battle against the group. IS will however continue to recruit and conduct attacks through its wilayats, affiliates and supporters in parts of the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe and North America. Part of this was seen in the recent truck attack in New York City which killed eight people and injured 11 others. IS has claimed responsibility for this attack and many others such as the vehicular attack in Barcelona, Spain (14 killed), and the suicide bombing in Quetta, Pakistan (15 killed) in August, and the bomb explosion in London (30 injured) in September. IS continues to pose not only a significant terrorist threat, but also a long-term ideological challenge, which is evident in the traction for its diverse online propaganda (magazines, newspapers, videos and statements) that continues to call for the establishment of the 'caliphate', and war against non-believers. It is therefore necessary to neutralise IS on both the terrorist and ideological fronts by preventing its armed attacks as well as negating key Islamic concepts that IS has manipulated to win supporters, sympathisers and legitimacy amongst its followers.

As IS re-strategises in the wake of its significant losses, it will rely on its extensive online presence to keep its struggle alive and maintain what would now be a 'virtual caliphate'. Thus, it is critical to de-legitimise IS' conception of the 'caliphate' which lured thousands to Iraq and Syria in 2014-2016. In this issue, **Ahmad Saiful Rijal Bin Hassan** debunks IS assertions about the caliphate and argues that there is no religious basis or obligation for any Muslim to migrate to the so-called caliphate or pledge allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. The article highlights IS transgressions of Islamic doctrines and practices, and Baghdadi's ambiguous family lineage and legitimacy as 'caliph'. Also on IS ideology, **Reid Hutchins** analyses the manipulation of concepts such as 'martyrdom', 'sacrifice' and 'jihad' by terrorist groups like IS and Al-Qaeda to further strategic goals. They have misconstrued and exploited the intended usages and true meanings of these concepts to mislead their followers into believing that suicide attacks and terrorism are permissible and justified. Given that groups such as IS and Al-Qaeda resort to social media as a medium of communication and propaganda, it is imperative that more action be taken not only to effectively debunk terrorists' distortion of religious doctrines but also to curtail their online dissemination of religious misinformation and virulent propaganda.

Radicalisation of vulnerable segments of society occurs not only online but also on the ground. **Farhan Zahid** narrows in on the radicalisation of educated youth in Pakistan, a rising trend that has been rising since the Afghan war in the 1980s and 1990s, and the emergence of militant groups such as Al-Qaeda and since 2014, IS. Countering terrorism goes beyond detecting and rounding up of jihadist cells in campuses and elsewhere. Challenging violent narratives as well as exclusivist and intolerant beliefs and

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mind-sets are critical in negating radicalisation efforts by terrorist groups.

The issue of radicalisation is also discussed by **Jade Hutchinson** who highlights the rise of far-right extremism in Australia and its impact on the local Muslim community. He warns that the mainstreaming of far-right narratives centred on Neo-Nazism and anti-immigration, could fuel Islamophobia and result in the alienation of the Muslim community, with adverse implications on Australia counter-extremism efforts.

De-legitimising Al-Baghdadi's 'Caliphate'

Ahmad Saiful Rijal Bin Hassan

The Islamic State (IS) terrorist group exploited the idea of a caliphate to lure thousands of fighters to 'migrate' to its territories. IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi also proclaimed himself as the new caliph for all Muslims. This paper seeks to debunk IS assertions about the caliphate and the legitimacy of al-Baghdadi as the caliph for Muslims by arguing that there is no religious basis or obligation for any Muslim to pledge allegiance to Baghdadi or join the ranks of IS.

Introduction

On 29 June 2014, the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group declared the establishment of a caliphate after having captured large swathes of land in the greater Levant. Five days later, the group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi[1] appeared for the first time delivering a sermon at the Great Mosque in Mosul, Iraq. He called on Muslims everywhere to pledge allegiance to him, after proclaiming himself as the new caliph for them.

Baghdadi's self-proclamation was received with consternation and derision throughout the Muslim world. Prominent Muslim leaders

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[1]Al Baghdadi's real name is Ibrahim bin 'Awwad bin Ibrahim al-Badri. He was born in 1971 in Samarra, Iraq. He holds a Bachelor's degree from the Islamic University in Baghdad and a Master's degree in Quranic studies from Saddam University for Islamic Studies. Following the US occupation of Iraq in 2003, al-Baghdadi formed an insurgent group. On February 2004, he was arrested and detained. He was classified as a low-level threat and was released after 10 months. In 2006, al-Baghdadi joined al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) led by Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi. When AQI dissolved and became Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), al-Baghdadi was put in charge of the group's religious affairs in some parts of Iraqi provinces. He also served as a member of the Shura Council of the group and as *Wali al-Wulat* (Chief Governor) in 2008. By then, he became the third man in command of ISI. Al-Baghdadi took charge of ISI on 16 May 2010 following the deaths of the group's leaders. Two years after taking charge of ISI, the group declared a worldwide caliphate with al-Baghdadi himself as the caliph.

and scholars rejected Baghdadi and his so-called caliphate and condemned IS for its atrocities and distortion of religious texts. On 19 September 2014, over 120 prominent Muslim scholars issued an Open Letter to Baghdadi, questioning his authority and pointing out serious errors in IS religious interpretations and practices. In the letter, the scholars pointed out that their views reflected "the opinions of the overwhelming majority of Sunni scholars over the course of Islamic history".

Nevertheless, the establishment of a 'caliphate' carried a certain appeal that managed to lure Muslims from many parts of the world to join IS despite actions and practices that are manifestly wrong and contrary to mainstream Islamic norms and teachings. This article attempts to debunk IS' claim that its caliphate is legitimate and that al-Baghdadi is the rightful caliph for all Muslims, more so now that the territories it once held in Iraq and Syria have been recaptured. Although the territorial 'caliphate' has ceased to exist, the virtual 'caliphate' which IS has been building up on social media and other online platforms will prevail, and may continue to beguile vulnerable segments of societies. IS has already appealed to its followers to *hijrah* (migrate) to its *wilayats* ('provinces') that stretch from West Africa to the Philippines.

Caliphate System of Government is not Mentioned in Al Qur'an

IS has used the narrative of reviving the caliphate to attract fighters and migrants from the Muslim world. It is presented as the ideal abode for Muslims where *Sharia* laws and values are 'upheld', and where their rights and dignity are 'restored'. IS argues that its 'caliphate' is the only legitimate Islamic state and system of governance. It declared that "*all parties based on communism, secularism, nationalism and liberalism; proponents of democracy and those who participate in its process are kafir*

(apostates)."[2] Consequently, all Muslims are enjoined to migrate to IS-controlled territories, "because *hijrah* [emigration] to the land of Islam is obligatory."[3] This claim was made in the very first issue of IS online magazine, *Dabiq* titled 'The Return of Khilafah' published in July 2014, a month after the proclamation of the 'caliphate'.

IS' claims are questionable as Islam does not prescribe a definite form of government. The Quran does not provide a definitive ruling for the establishment of a 'caliphate' system. This is evident from the only two Quranic verses making reference to the *Khalifah* (caliph):

> *"And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels; "I will create a vicegerent on earth."[khalifah]."*(Al-Baqarah, 2:30)[4]
> *"O David, We have appointed you vicegerent [khalifah] on earth. Therefore, judge between people with truth, and do not follow (your) desire lest it should lead you astray from Allah's path."*(Sad, 38:26)[5]

The verses mention two patriarchs as the rightful examples for Muslims to follow in terms of representing God in implementing His commandments based on justice and truth and not intolerance and falsehood. The literal meaning of the word 'caliph' or in Arabic, *khalifah* means viceroy, vicegerent, vicar or successor. According to *'Tafsir al-Jalalayn',* a classical Sunni *tafsir* (exegesis) of the Quran, the first verse explains that Prophet Adam was sent to earth as a vicegerent (*khalifah)* of God, which signifies that mankind should represent his creator by celebrating His praise and glorifying His Holiness through his worthy presence as human beings.[6]

The second verse, according to Ibn Kathir, a prominent Muslim scholar who specialised in the field of Quranic exegesis, is the advice from Allah to Prophet David to rule according to truth and justice and not to be swayed by his desire when making a judgement.[7]

The Grand Mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Shawki Allam argues that the concept of the caliphate was derived from political necessities rather than from religious texts. The caliphate theory according to him was considered "*a practical codification of the political system dictated by the then political, social and religious landscape.*" This was what happened when Abu Bakr was chosen to succeed Prophet Muhammad after his death as the first caliph. He was elected during an assembly that discussed who should manifest the political nature of the contention over the succession to Muslim rule.[8] Sheikh Shawki further reiterated that: "*Islam is not a static, authoritarian system devoid of flexibility… Islam has never required its adherents to give up their own cultures nor dictated on them a specific norm of governance.*"

Singapore's Mufti, Dr Fatris Bakaram, in urging leaders to promote an understanding of Islam within the context of Singapore's diverse society, said: "*They should challenge the idea of the caliphate as the only ideal and legitimate political system that Muslims can live and take part in. Concepts like the caliphate must be understood in the context and socio-political environment of the time.*"[9]

Other Systems of Government Are Acceptable

IS claims that Muslims are not permitted to live in any country, including Muslim-majority countries because they are not governed by *Sharia* law. However, this remains arguable. Prominent Muslim scholars around the world

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[2] ISIS published a pamphlet titled *HazihiAqidatunaWaHazaManhajuna* (This is our creed and our way).
[3] Dabiq, "The Return of Khilafah", at: https://clarionproject.org/docs/isis-isil-islamic-state-magazine-Issue-1-the-return-of-khilafah.pdf. (accessed October 9, 2017)
[4] Ahamed, Syed Vickar, "English Translation of the Message of The Quran", September 1, 2007.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Tafsir al-Jalalayn, *altafsir.com,* http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=2&tAyahNo=30&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=2

[7] Tafsir Ibn Kathir
[8] Dr. ShawkiAllam, "Shattering the myth of the alleged caliphate QSIS", *Dar Al Ifta Al-Missriyyah*, accessed at http://eng.dar-alifta.org/Foreign/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=574&CategoryID=5
[9] Charissa Yong, "S'pore's rejection of extremism pays off", *The Straits Times*, October 8, 2017, at: http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/spores-rejection-of-extremism-pays-off. (accessed October 9, 2017)

such as former Mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Ali Gomaa, Yasir Qadhi, Hamza Yusuf, Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah, have opined that Muslims can live in countries not governed by *Sharia*, as long as they have the freedom to practice their religious beliefs and are not persecuted.[10] There is no reason for Muslims in such countries to migrate. In fact, Muslims are encouraged to spread the message of peace and mercy and be proactive in nation-building processes. This can be observed when the early Muslim traders from the Arab world travelled and settled in parts of the world such as China and the Malay Archipelago, co-existed with non-Muslims and fostered good relations.[11]

Muslim scholars from Al-Azhar University point out that the Prophet himself had asked his followers to migrate to Abyssinia which was then under a Christian king, Najasyi (Negus), to escape persecution in Mecca in the 7th century. He did not condemn Najasyi (Negus) for not ruling by the *Sharia* and neither did he ask his followers to return after Islam was established in Mecca. Neither was Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) condemned for serving in the government of a non-Muslim king.[12]

Even if there should be a caliphate, as some Muslim scholars believe, it "must emerge from a consensus of Muslim countries, organisations of Islamic scholars and Muslims across the globe".[13] One of the essential components of Islamic governance is consultation; there is no evidence IS engaged in any consultation with the wider Muslim community except among themselves. Muslim scholars have long reached a consensus that seeking counsel

with others on matters of the *Ummah* was an obligation and praiseworthy as it emulates the Prophet's example.[14] In the Open Letter to al-Baghdadi, the scholars ask al-Baghdadi: "*who gave you authority over the ummah*?", and warned that "announcing a caliphate without consensus is sedition (fitnah)".

Islam places great emphasis on the principle of *Shura* (consultation) on matters concerning the Islamic community. The Quran attested to this matter: "*And those who respond to their Lord, keep up prayer, who consult among themselves, and who give out (to the poor) part of what we have given them.*" (*Asy-Syura*, 42:38). This spirit of consultation was also exemplified by Prophet Muhammad. As observed by his companion, Abu Hurairah, "*Never have I seen anyone more prone to seeking his Companions' counsel than the Messenger of God.*"[15]

IS Violation of Islamic Teachings

Muslims have been exhorted to migrate to the caliphate because it was purportedly governed according to the *Sharia*. However, the caliphate is not Islamic because many of IS actions are contrary to Islamic doctrines and practices. The Open Letter to al-Baghdadi cited clear violations of Islamic Law committed by al-Baghdadi and IS. These transgressions include the following:

(i) The killing of non-combatants, journalists, aid workers and those who opposed IS and refused to pledge their obedience to al-Baghdadi;[16]
(ii) The forced conversion of non-Muslims which goes against the Qur'an which states: "*There shall be no compulsion in the religion*" (*Al-Baqarah*, 2:256);
(iii) The torture of IS opponents and mutilation of their corpses;

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[10] PERGAS (Singapore Islamic Scholars and Religious Teachers Association), *Moderation in Islam in the Context of Muslim Community in Singapore*, Singapore:2004), pp. 111-115.
[11] Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "Living In a Non-Muslim Country: Responding to The Idea of Hijrah (Migration)", *RSIS Commentaries*, May 18, 2007, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CO07040.pdf. (accessed May 16, 2017)
[12] Abdul Rahman b. Mualaa Al-Luwaihiq Al Mutairi (transl. by Jamal Al-Din M. Zarabozo) (2001), "Religious Extremism in the Life of Contemporary Muslims", Denver: Al-Basheer Publications, pp. 262-3.
[13] See Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi, point 22, : http://www.lettertobaghdadi.com/. (Accessed October 10, 2017)

[14] Ahmad Al-Raysuni, *Al-ShuraThe Qur'anic Principle of Consultation* (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2012), pp2-6.
[15] Jami' at-Tarmidhi, Book 23, Hadith 48, Chapter: What Has Been Related About Consultation. https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi/23/48. (Accessed May 17, 2017)
[16] Lizzie Dearden, "Isis 'kills at least six Red Cross' aid workers in Afghanistan", *Independent*, February 8, 2017, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-islamic-state-afghanistan-wilayat-khorasan-red-cross-aid-workers-killed-shot-gunmen-massacre-a7568791.html (accessed May 11, 2017)

(iv) The desecration of tombs and places of worship; IS destroyed Christian churches, razed ancient sites and blew up the tombs of Prophets and *Sahabahs* (Prophet Muhammad's Companions).[17] In Islamic jurisprudence, it is not permissible to destroy any places of worship or tombs.

(v) Exploitation of Islamic Concepts -- IS has corrupted Islamic teachings, values and principles particularly on matters pertaining to *Jihad*, *Takfir* and *Hijra*

Non-Recognition by Muslim World

To be a caliph of the world, al-Baghdadi must be accepted and recognised as such by prominent and respected political leaders, scholars and religious councils of Muslim communities worldwide. However, no such recognition has been accorded to him; on the contrary, many have denounced al-Baghdadi and declared that he and IS do not represent the Muslims. In a research conducted by Pew Research Center, 11 countries with significant Muslim populations including Lebanon, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey and Jordan, held an unfavourable opinion of IS.[18]

Muslim leaders and scholars have condemned IS exploitation of religious teachings to justify its violence and brutality. In India, a country with more than 189 million Muslims, at least 70,000 clerics issued a *fatwa* (religious edict) to condemn IS atrocities, and other like-minded groups.[19] In Bangladesh, which has 148 million Muslims, over 100,000 Muslim clerics issued a fatwa condemning IS militants as "enemies of Islam"[20] and declaring that violent attacks on non-Muslims and secular writers and activists as "*haram*" (forbidden) and un-Islamic.[21]

In Indonesia, home to the largest Muslim population (225 million) in the world, its Ulema Council declared IS terrorist acts as *haram*.[22] In November 2015, the Indonesian Nahdlat-ul-Ulama, the world's largest Muslim group with 40 million members, released a 90-minute film criticising IS perverse interpretation of religious texts. Al-Azhar, the top religious authority in the Muslim world also condemned IS. Commenting on IS, Grand Mufti Sheikh Shawki said: "*An extremist and bloody group such as this poses a danger to Islam and Muslims, tarnishing its image as well as shedding blood and spreading corruption.*"[23] The influential Qatar-based Egyptian theologian Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, President of the World Federation of Muslim Scholars, announced that Baghdadi's declaration of a caliphate "*is void under the Sharia*".[24] The venerable Muslim scholar Shaykh Abdullah bin Bayyah, President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies in Abu Dhabi, issued a fatwa stating that "establishing a caliphate by force is a misreading of religious doctrine".[25]

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[17] Kareem Shaheen, "Isis destroys historic Christian and Muslim shrines in northern Iraq", *The Guardian*, March 20, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/20/isis-destroys-historic-christian-muslim-shrines-iraq (accessed May 11, 2017).

[18] Jacob Poushter, "In nations with significant Muslim populations, much disdain for ISIS", November 17, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/17/in-nations-with-significant-muslim-populations-much-disdain-for-isis/ (accessed May 15, 2017).

[19] Caroline Mortimer, "70,000 Indian Muslim clerics issue fatwa against Isis, the Taliban, al-Qaeda and other terror groups", *The Independent*, December 10, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/70000-indian-muslim-clerics-issue-fatwa-against-isis-the-taliban-al-qaida-and-other-terror-groups-a6768191.html (accessed May 15, 2017).

[20] SumonCorraya, "About 100,000 Muslim clerics sign fatwa against Daesh in Bangladesh", *AsiaNews*, September 6, 2017, http://www.asianews.it/news-en/About-100,000-Muslim-clerics-sign-fatwa-against-Daesh-in-Bangladesh-37729.html (accessed October 10, 2017).

[21] Maaz Hussain, "Anti-Terror Fatwa Endorsed by 100,000 Bangladeshi Islamic Scholars", *VOA News*, June 21, 2016, https://www.voanews.com/a/fatwa-endorsed-by-bangladeshi-islamic-scholars-aims-to-curb-terrorism/3384976.html (accessed October 10, 2017).

[22] SugengTriono, "MUI: TidakPerlu Fatwa, ISIS Sudah Haram", *Liputan 6*, August 7, 2014, http://news.liputan6.com/read/2087796/mui-tidak-perlu-fatwa-isis-sudah-haram (accessed May 15, 2017)

[23] "Al-Azhar condemns ISIS as corrupt and a danger to Islam", *The Daily Star*, August 13, 2014, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Aug-13/267022-al-azhar-condemns-isis-as-corrupt-and-a-danger-to-islam.ashx. (accessed May 15, 2017)

[24] "Qaradawi says 'jihadist caliphate' violates sharia", *Al-Arabiya English News*, July 5, 2014, http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/07/05/Qaradawi-says-jihadist-caliphate-violates-sharia-.html. accessed October 10, 2017

[25] Dina Temple-Raston, "Prominent Muslim Sheikh Issues Fatwa against ISIS Violence", *NPR*, September 25, 2014,

Invalidity of obligatory *Bay'a* to al-Baghdadi

When the declaration of the caliphate was made, its spokesperson al-Adnani called upon all Muslims in the world to pledge allegiance (*bay'a*) to al-Baghdadi as caliph: "*We inform the Muslims that, with the announcement of the caliphate, it has become obligatory for all Muslims to give bay'a and support to Caliph Ibrahim.*"[26] In the same speech, he added that:

> "*The Islamic state – represented by ahlul-halli-wal-'aqd (its people of authority), consisting of its senior figures, leaders, and the shura council – resolved to announce the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate, the appointment of a caliph for the Muslims, and the bay'a (pledge of allegiance) to the sheikh, the mujahid, the scholar who practices what he preached, the worshipper, the leader, the warrior, the reviver, descent from the family of the Prophet, the slave of Allah, Ibrahim bin 'Awwad bin Ibrahim bin 'ali bin Muhammad al-Badri al-Hashimi al-Husayni al-Qurashiby lineage, as-Samurra'i by birth and upbringing, al-Baghdadi by residence and scholarship. And he has accepted the bay'a. Thus, he is the Imam and Caliph for the Muslims everywhere.*"[27]

IS often quotes a *hadeeth* or prophetic narration that states: "*One who dies without having sworn allegiance will die the death of one belonging to the Days of Ignorance [Pre-Islamic times].*"[28] Based on this *hadeeth*, IS claims that it is obligatory for all Muslims to pledge allegiance to an *Imam* or leader. Those who rejected the Imam will be persuaded to 'repent', and those who refused will be fought till they submit to the leader. According to Islamic tradition, the permissibility of *bay'a* must be ascertained by the majority of Muslim scholars in the society. Since IS does not represent the majority Muslim community, the *bay'a* to al-Baghdadi is considered wrong and unacceptable. Shaykh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi, a prominent Syrian scholar argues in his book, *Refuting ISIS*, that:

> "*Dignitaries who exert authority within the Muslim Nation are the ones who have sole right to it. And these dignitaries already chose a king, emir, sultan, or president for their countries, responsible for their economic and political affairs. Therefore, allegiance to the leader of ISIS known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is fundamentally impermissible and ultimately void, bearing no legal consequences…*"[29]

Like many other terrorist and extremist groups such as Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah, IS uses *bay'a* as a psychological tool to ensure members' compliance to its orders and devotion to its agenda. Many IS members are 'trapped', believing erroneously that they would attract divine retribution if they disobey orders or break their *bay'a*.[30]

Al-Baghdadi's Ambiguous Family Lineage

IS claims that al-Baghdadi's lineage traces back to Prophet Muhammad. In a pamphlet published by IS titled, "*Extend your hands and pledge loyalty to al Baghdadi,*" IS asserts that al-Baghdadi is:

> "*…one of the grandsons of Urmush bin Ali bin 'Eid bin Badri, bin*

http://www.npr.org/2014/09/25/351277631/prominent-muslim-sheikh-issues-fatwa-against-isis-violence. (accessed October 10, 2017)

[26]Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, "This is the Promise of Allah," *Al-Hayat Media Center, (2014* https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/shaykh-abc5ab-mue1b8a5ammad-al-e28098adnc481nc4ab-al-shc481mc4ab-22this-is-the-promise-of-god22-en.pdf. *(*accessed February6, 2017)

[27] "Extend your hands and pledge loyalty to Baghdadi," by Sheikh al-MujahidTuriki al-Binali.

[28] According to Musa Cerantonio, Muslims who do not pledge their allegiance to a leader ie, Al-Baghdadi, he or she will die as a disbeliever. See Grame Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants", *The Atlantic*, March 2015,

https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/. (accessed October 10, 2017)

[29]Shaykh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi, *Refuting ISIS* (US: Sacred Knowledge, 2015), 26-27.

[30] Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "The Practice of Bai'ah in Islamic Groups," *counterideology2*, July 16, 2007, https://counterideology2.wordpress.com/2007/07/16/the-practice-of-baiah-in-islamic-groups/. (accessed February 7, 2017)

Badruddin bin Khalil bin Husein bin Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-Awwah bin Asy-SyarifYahya 'Izzuddin bin Asy-SyarifBasyir bin Majid bin Athiyyah bin Ya'la bin Duweid bin Majid bin Abdurrahman bin Qasim bin Asy-Syarif Idris bin Ja'far Ash-Shodiq bin Muhammad al-baqir bin Zainal Abidin bin Husein bin Alibin Abi Talib and Fatima binte Muhammad.

This pamphlet was based mainly on a monologue written by ISIS ideologue, Turki al-Binali. He claimed that al-Baghdadi is qualified to command the loyalty of Muslims as he is a descendant of Prophet Muhammad.[31] The pamphlet also outlined his academic studies of Islamic jurisprudence as well as Quranic studies.

The claim that al Baghdadi is a descendant of the Prophet is dubious and unverifiable. Firstly, there is a discrepancy in his lineage. The widely-distributed pamphlet did not mention al-Baghdadi's full name or real name or that of his father. Turki referred to him by his *nom de guerre*, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as 'one of the grandsons of Urmush'. Secondly, current descendants of those who lived during Prophet Muhammad's time would be at least the 40th generation, whereas al-Baghdadi's ancestors fall short of 8 generations in his lineage. Thirdly, there is an absence of clear and complete biography of al-Baghdadi. It is obvious that the claims about al-Baghdadi's lineage are fabricated to enhance his credibility and legitimacy as caliph.[32]

Conclusion

IS has managed to mislead vulnerable segments of Muslim societies through its distortion of religious texts and misrepresentation of concepts like the caliphate, *hijrah* (migration), *takfir* (excommunication), *bay'a* and *jihad*. Now that the lands of the 'caliphate' have been recaptured,IS will seek to compensate its

loss by consolidating its 'virtual caliphate' and stepping up its propaganda activities through social media and other platforms to maintain its influence over its followers and win new converts. In addition to diligently exposing IS' manipulation of religious doctrines, it is imperative that technology companies and service providers step up counter-measures to detect and curtail the online dissemination of poisonous propaganda by violent groups like IS, Al-Qaeda and others. They have effectively seized control of powerful tools of communication to exercise control and influence and carve out 'virtual enclaves' where they can operate with impunity. Failure to redress this situation will result in the continued spread of religious misinformation and violent rhetoric leading to terrorist attacks and the revival of a territorial 'Islamic State'.

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[31] Alexander Dziadosz, "Islamic State lays out case for 'allegiance' to its leader," *Reuters*, October 2, 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-baghdadi-idUSKCN0HR19820141002. (accessed February 7, 2017)

[32] Syed Huzaifah Bin Othman Alkaff, "Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the Imposter," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis*, Volume 6, Issue 10, November 2014.

Islam and Suicide Terrorism: Separating Fact from Fiction

Reid Hutchins

'Sacrifice', 'martyrdom' and 'jihad' are Islamic concepts that have been distorted and exploited by the 'Islamic State' (IS) to pursue an extreme Pan-Islamic vision. This exploitation of Islam is a recruitment tactic that uses human lives as a weapon for spreading maximum terror and damage. By using Islam as its ideological basis, IS claims to have legitimacy and religious justification. From this false legitimacy, radicalised recruits are motivated to kill and die to support IS' violent goals. This article analyses how IS has shaped its ideological foundation with a distorted interpretation of Islam and radicalised its recruits in the process.

Introduction

A voice message by Osama Bin Laden, stating 'We love death as you love life' in the aftermath of 9/11, set the tone for radicalisation and spurred the use of suicide terrorism as a predominant tactic employed by Al-Qaeda and presently, the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group as well. As such, Bin Laden's death slogan for Al-Qaeda has also become a rallying cry for other radical Islamist terrorists to kill and die.

In recent times, a diverse range of terrorist and militant organizations with nationalist, separatist and religious inclinations, have adopted suicide terrorism as a tactic of psychological warfare and violent resistance. These included the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Hezbollah during the civil wars in Sri Lanka and Lebanon respectively. The LTTE has been credited with using suicide belts and incorporating female suicide squads. Yet, commentators and policy-makers have generally stereotyped suicide bombers as young, religiously-radicalised males with violent tendencies and a fanatical devotion to Islam. In this regard, the most important characteristic of this suicide bomber is the willingness to kill civilians, security forces and government personnel and die.

The media has created an inaccurate link between Islam and terrorism. 'Martyrdom' and 'jihad' (struggle) are terms regularly associated with suicide terrorism with a lack of discussion on their true meaning and significance within the Islamic tradition. This link has existed because terrorist organisations such as IS and Al-Qaeda profess strict adherence to their perverse understanding of Islamic doctrine and falsely claim that suicide bombings (described as 'martyrdom' operations) in pursuit of strategic goals are permissible. An analysis of the Islamic concept of sacrifice, martyrdom and jihad demonstrates how terrorist organisations have misconstrued and exploited the intended usages and true meanings of these Islamic concepts for recruitment purposes. Their erroneous claims and propaganda have misled their followers into believing that suicide terrorism is morally permitted and justified.

Martyrdom and Suicide Terrorism

The willingness of a terrorist to die for the group's cause is a common characteristic of IS recruits. IS recruits believe that suicide attacks represent the highest form of sacrifice to achieve the group's political goals and enforce its religious ideology.[1] Suicide has become a basic yet lethally effective strategy among radical jihadists to inflict maximum casualties and damage to increase the shock value. Radical jihadists wrongly

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[1] Roy, Olivier. "Who are the new jihadis?". *The Guardian*. April 20, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/apr/13/who-are-the-new-jihadis.

believe that they adhere to a moral logic grounded in religion. This belief has religious significance as sacred values and practices have been a basis for Islam that radical jihadists feel morally obliged to protect. 'Martyrdom' is driven by this wrongly perceived moral obligation to defend the sanctity of Islam, which supersedes basic self-interests, such as protecting one's life.

Given that the Quran forbids suicide, terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda and IS re-frame suicide as 'martyrdom'. These groups conflate martyrdom with jihad to create a violent narrative of suffering, struggle and redemption. In addition, these groups have hijacked sacred moral practices in Islam by distorting them to create 'real enemies' such as US occupying forces and 'existential enemies' such as Western values. The 'us' (*jihadists*) against 'them' (*kafir*) narrative has also facilitated followers of extremist ideologies to kill oneself, other Muslims and non-Muslims under the pretext of religious adherence.

There has been a significant rise in suicide terrorism as a response to the increase in violent civil and military conflict in the post-9/11 world.[2] There is little surprise that victims or refugees of conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria facing war-torn realities are lured by terrorist promises of divine reward. In such a situation when one is facing a constant threat of death, religiously justifying suicide for the sake of one's community could become the most desirable or the only option to die with a sense of meaning.[3] Suicide operations undertaken by IS terrorists have been a lethal defensive tactic during IS' insurgency in Iraq.

Extremists' willingness to become suicide bombers can be attributed to their status as powerless individuals and the empowered feeling derived from challenging their oppressors. Terrorist organisations distort Islamic teachings under the guise of religious

authority to construct human life as an expendable resource. Suicide terrorists, particularly those living in conflict zones, are more vulnerable to promises made to change their communities' political and social circumstances. It may also help the 'martyr' attain recognition in their community and elevate the social status of his or her family.

A study of 'self-martyrs' who failed in their respective suicide attacks in Palestine showed that they depicted 'sub-clinical suicidal tendencies' and also suffered from depression.[4] Other studies on suicide terrorism have found that the personal lives of these individuals were often unstable. Suicide attackers tend to have histories of recent divorces, financial troubles, emotional breakdowns, health issues and social or cultural isolation.[5] Some of these factors, including social isolation, depression, hopelessness, guilt and shame, were also seen in 9/11 hijacker and pilot, Mohamed Atta.

While the goals of terrorist organisations include strategic, ideological or territorial considerations, the motivations of suicide terrorists can be based on strong emotive reasons.[6] Another critical factor that acts as a motivation is the view that Western aggression and oppression of Muslims are directly responsible for the social and cultural degradation of Islamic values and communities.[7]

Sacrifice and Violence

To understand the motivations of suicide terrorists from jihadist terror organisations, there needs to be an understanding of how

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[2] Global Terrorism Database. 2017 https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?search=suicide+bombing&sa.x=0&sa.y=0&sa=Search.

[3] K. M. Fierke. "Agents of death: the structural logic of suicide terrorism and martyrdom." *International Theory* 1 no.1 (2009):155-184. doi: 10.1017/S1752971909000049.

[4] Ariel Merari, Ilan Diamant, Arie Bibi, Yoav Broshi, and Giora Zakin. "Personality Characteristics of "Self Martyrs"/"Suicide Bombers" and Organizers of Suicide Attacks." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22no.1 (2009):87-101. doi: 10.1080/09546550903409312.

[5] Adam Lankford. "Précis of the myth of martyrdom: what really drives suicide bombers, rampage shooters, and other self-destructive killers." *The Behavioral and brain sciences* 37 no.4 (2014):351-362. doi: 10.1017/S0140525X13001581.

[6] K. M. Fierke. "Agents of death: the structural logic of suicide terrorism and martyrdom." *International Theory* 1 no.1(2009):155-184. doi: 10.1017/S1752971909000049.

[7] Robert A. Pape. "The strategic logic of suicide terrorism." *American political science review* 97 no.3 (2003):343-361.

the Islamic concept of sacrifice has been misconstrued. Islam, or *al-Islam* means to surrender or sacrifice oneself to the will of God. This state of surrender is done peacefully, as the word Islam is derived from the Arabic word *salam* – meaning peace. Salam itself is an integral part of Islam – appearing 129 times in the Quran and is a formal greeting between Muslims.[8]

The Quran teaches peaceful self-sacrifice in fulfillment of God's will. However, there are violent and non-violent interpretations of what sacrifice means in the Islamic tradition. Here, the most significant difference of opinion concerning the meaning of sacrifice occurs between moderates and extremists. For moderates who form the overwhelming majority of Muslims, sacrifice has varying levels of submission and surrender; they regard illegitimate jihad as an aberration of Islamic doctrine, and oppose the extremists' narrow and violent views. The extremist mindset however, is reductionist and violence oriented in its understanding of Islamic sacrifice.[9]

Violent self-sacrifice as an act propagated by terrorist groups has multiple, overlapping motivations. At the basic level, suicide terrorism is voluntary death intended to kill and maim others for a religious or political goal.[10] Suicide terrorists can come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and can include individuals who are educated, uneducated, and rich or poor. But they are united by a shared sense of humiliation.. The humiliation suffered by Muslims due to Western 'occupation' and 'domination' within the Middle East provides a fertile ground for terrorist recruitment in areas such as Syria, Iraq, Gaza, Yemen and Lebanon. In politically and economically fractured societies, which are suffering under conditions of social trauma and humiliation, sacrificing one's life for the community has a heroic appeal. In Palestine for instance, the first and second *intifadas* (1985-2005) were

viewed heroically within local Palestinian communities, despite the resulting violence and destruction from frequent suicide bombings.

Detangling Islamic Jihad

'Sacrifice' is used in the Quran to mean 'giving up' one's immoral desires, but not 'giving up' oneself.[11] Allah requires Muslims to demonstrate submission, but does not require the destruction of oneself or others.[12] However, the term 'sacrifice' is inseparable from jihad, which has a long and complicated history with divergent meanings. The mainstream practice of jihad in Islam is non-violent. One interpretation is that it is a practice in selflessness.[13] This implies the charitable nature of jihad by imploring Muslims to have greater social responsibility towards others and work towards the greater good. Jihad involves the 'struggle against one's self',[14] an 'internal struggle' undertaken individually by Muslims to overcome selfish desires and temptations.[15] The extremists however give emphasis on 'jihad of the sword'. Violent jihad has come to define the overall concept of jihad, as radical Islamist terrorists use it in a reductionist way. The relationship between jihad and violence is difficult to discern. But the Quran does not command or condone illegitimate violence and terrorism.[16] Various sections of the Quran provide an account on conduct during war. Violence, according to the Quran, must be proportional and defensive in nature as it states:

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[8] K. M. Fierke. "Agents of death: the structural logic of suicide terrorism and martyrdom," *International Theory* 1 no.1 (2009):155-184. doi: 10.1017/S1752971909000049.

[9] Melissa Finn *Al-Qaeda and Sacrifice*. (London, UNKNOWN: Pluto Press,2003).

[10] Mia Bloom, "Motivations for suicide terrorism," in *Root causes of suicide terrorism: The globalization of martyrdom*, ed. Amy Pedahzur (New York: Routledge, 2006), 25.

[11] Ivan Strenski, "Sacrifice, Gift and the Social Logic of Muslim 'Human Bombers'," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, no. 3 (2003): 1-34.

[12] Ivan Strenski, "Sacrifice, Gift and the Social Logic of Muslim 'Human Bombers'," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, no. 3 (2003): 1-34.

[13] Scott Atran, "The Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism." *The Washington Quarterly* 29 no.2 (2009):127-147. doi: 10.1162/016366006776026239.

[14] Roxanne L. Euben, "Jihad and political violence." *Current History 101* no.658 (2002) :365.

[15] Roxanne L. Euben, "Killing (For) Politics: Jihad, Martyrdom, and Political Action." *Political Theory* 30 no.1 (2002):4-35. doi: 10.1177/0090591702030001002.

[16] John L. Esposito, "Islam and Political Violence," Religions 6 no.3 (2015):1067-1081. doi: 10.3390/rel6031067.

2:194: […] *whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you.* [17]

2:190: *Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.* [18]

However, interpretations vary regarding what is justifiable and permissible violence. The interpretive range within Islamic theology on the use of violence is lengthy and has evolved across time and space. These various understandings are based on historical and contemporary accounts of early Arabic conquests, foreign invasions, colonialism and imperialism in the Middle East.[19] Although the changing impacts of these events on the Middle East remain contested, there is greater certainty that they led to significant political and social changes in the region. These modern political and social changes in the Middle East have strained relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, and violent jihad has thrived. In Iraq alone, more successful suicide terrorist attacks have been carried out since 2003 compared to other countries with a U.S military presence in the last 25 years.[20]

Although exact figures remain unclear, a February 2017 report suggests 140 IS attacks in 29 countries outside of Iraq and Syria has so far killed 2,043 people since 2014. [21] Recent terrorist attacks in Paris and London have also contributed to a shift from localised suicide attacks in the Middle East, to globalised terrorist attacks in Europe.[22]

In this regard, the IS brand of terrorism linked to militant fanaticism is a continuing cause for serious concern. IS members and supporters, especially home-grown terrorists born and raised in the West, are at odds with their societies. They believe these societies exist in total ignorance of a true, higher divinity in service of God.[23] A societal ignorance and rejection of Islam, paired with Western military campaigns in the Middle East, have exacerbated animosities against the non-believers and spurred a cultish devotion to the caliphate. This devotion partly accounts for the rise in foreign terrorist fighters joining IS in Syria and Iraq in 2014-2016 and a subsequent involvement in suicide bombings. The rejection of the West, with its real and imagined antitheses to Islam, is a retreat from modernity, as the IS jihadist yearns to reinstate the ideal 'Islamic community' based on a radical interpretation of Islamic doctrine.[24]

Conclusion

It is evident that suicide terrorism follows a strategic logic that has provided several tactical benefits to terrorist organisations.[25] Despite the various personal motivations for suicide terrorists to engage in self-sacrifice, it is used as a tool to achieve strategic aims at an organisational level. In the case of IS, its tactics of establishing a caliphate remains persistent and dangerous. Although IS has lost most of its territories in Iraq and Syria, including its de facto capital Raqqa, and thousands of its combatants have surrendered or escaped, the threat remains. Besides the small pockets of territories in the Levant and wilayats (outside Iraq and Syria), the rhetoric of suicide terrorism and self-sacrifice still persists. In this regard, groups such as IS among others, primarily resort to social media as a medium of communication with supporters and for recruitment efforts. Thus, even though the terrorist groups might be on the defensive on the ground, virtually they still manage to spread their ideology and instill fear through their supporters

[17] "The Noble Qur'an." https://quran.com/.
[18] "The Noble Qur'an." https://quran.com/.
[19] Roxanne L. Euben, "Killing (For) Politics: Jihad, Martyrdom, and Political Action." *Political Theory* 30 no.1 (2002):4-35. doi: 10.1177/0090591702030001002.
[20] Assaf Moghadam, "Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks," *International Security* 33 no.3 (2009):46-78. doi: 10.1162/isec.2009.33.3.46.
[21] Tim Lister et al. "ISIS goes global: 143 attacks in 29 countries have killed 2,043". *CNN*. October 24 2017. http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/17/world/mapping-isis-attacks-around-the-world/index.html.
[22] Assaf Moghadam "Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks," *International Security* 33 no.3:46-78. doi: 10.1162/isec.2009.33.3.46.

[23] Anthony N. Celso, "The Islamic State and Boko Haram: Fifth Wave Jihadist Terror Groups," *Orbis* 59 no.2 (2015):249.
[24] Anthony N. Celso, "The Islamic State and Boko Haram: Fifth Wave Jihadist Terror Groups," *Orbis* 59 no.2:249.
[25] Pape, Robert A. 2003. "The strategic logic of suicide terrorism." American political science review 97 (03):343-361.

perpetrating minor and major attacks. Thus, it is evident that efforts should be dedicated towards debunking IS manipulation of religious doctrines to justify suicide terrorism and armed jihad and the exploitation of technology to sustain itself in the virtual world.

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Radicalisation of Campuses in Pakistan

Farhan Zahid

Radicalisation of youth at various university campuses in Pakistan and the participation of a select few in militancy are a serious concern. This trend has generally been associated with the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group although it was pioneered by Al-Qaeda. While youth radicalisation is also not entirely new, it is a continuation of a historical trend that has existed since the 1990s. In this regard, the case study of youth radicalisation at the International Islamic University (IIUI) is instructive. Though IIUI is not the only university that faces the problem of youth radicalisation, it presents policy-relevant insights into the environment that facilitates radicalisation and increases youth vulnerability to militant recruitment. .

Introduction

Involvement of educated youth in terrorism is not a new phenomenon. During the Cold War, a number of left-leaning terrorist groups comprising educated individuals carried out terrorist attacks in South America (e.g. Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, Shining Path and others) and Western Europe (e.g. the Red Army Faction, Red Brigades, Communist Combatant Cells).
The case of Islamist militancy is no different in this connection. A number of leaders of prominent jihadist groups are highly educated. For instance, Osama Bin Laden, the founder of Al-Qaeda, had a Bachelors in Civil Engineering from King Abdul Aziz University. His successor, Ayman Al-Zawahiri also has a Masters in Surgery from Cairo University. Similarly, the head of IS Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, likewise has a PhD in Islamic theology from Baghdad University. Similarly, Anwar Al-Awlaki of the Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was a Civil Engineering graduate from Colorado State University and had a Masters in agricultural economics from New Mexico State University.

Following the September 2001 attacks in the US and the ensuing War on Terror, a number of Pakistani jihadist groups formerly involved in Kashmir and anti-Shia militancy joined ranks with Al-Qaeda Central (AQC) to wage 'jihad' against the Pakistani state and its security institutions. This gave birth to a new breed of militant leadership in Pakistan that comprises local Pakistani radicalised youth, expatriate Pakistanis such as Omar Saeed Shaikh and Dr. Aafia Siddiquie as well as Al-Qaeda-linked foreign jihadists.

In the last three years, a number of self-radicalised cells and 'lone-wolf' individuals affiliated with the Islamic State of Khurasan (ISK), IS's Afghanistan-Pakistan chapter or Wilayat Khurasan, have been neutralised in Pakistani major cities such as Lahore, Karachi, Sialkot, Peshawar and Quetta. Most of these cells comprised of university and college-educated youth, leading to speculation that a new breed of educated jihadists is emerging in Pakistan under the IS banner. However, this is factually incorrect: IS is not the only global militant organisation that has galvanised support from radicalised, educated youth in Pakistan nor is this trend entirely new. It is the continuation of a historical trend that started with the fascination of young Islamists with Al-Qaeda's open challenge to the US and its allies.

In Pakistan, jihadist cells linked with various militant organisations have been busted in reputed institutions such as the Karachi University, Institute of Business Administration (IBA), NED University of Engineering and Technology, Punjab University, and Mehran University of Engineering and Technology. For instance, two Al-Qaeda cells were neutralised in the hostels of Punjab University in 2015. Similarly, the arrest of the Saad Aziz-led militant cell involved in the Saffora Goth massacre of 43 Ismaili-Shias in 2014 in Karachi is another case in point. More

recently, another Al-Qaeda linked militant cell, Jamaat Ansar Al-Shriah, was neutralised in Karachi. The militants studied at NED, Sir Syed and Karachi universities.

Given the above, the larger issue that warrants introspection is youth radicalisation on university campuses in Pakistan and how this is linked with the country's jihadist landscape. While it would not be right to single out any one university and make a case out of it, it is also true that some university campuses in Pakistan appear to be more prone to radicalisation as compared to others. The case of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) is an instructive case study in this regard. This article studies the case of IIUI with respect to youth radicalisation, and the susceptibility of some students to jihadist recruitment.

Historical Context

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the subsequent anti-Soviet Jihad (1979-89) had not only devastated Afghan society but also adversely affected Pakistan's social fabric. It resulted in growing intolerance, religious conservatism and the spread of jihadi concepts. It can be argued that the 9/11 attacks and subsequent 'war on terror' were just the triggering factors for jihad against the Pakistani state. The involvement of jihadists of Pakistani origins in global jihad predates the 9/11 attacks. For instance, both Ramzi Yousaf, an Afghan War veteran who masterminded the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and Khalid Shaikh Mohammad (KSM), the main architect of the abortive Operation Bojinka in Manila, are Pakistani nationals. (KSM was later named the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks.)

During this period, former President General Zia-ul-Haq (1978- 1988) took various steps towards the Islamisation of Pakistani state and society. A number of new laws such as the Hudood Laws 1979, Zakat and Ushr Ordinance 1980 and amendments to Blasphemy Laws 1986 were introduced. Many seminaries linked to jihad in Afghanistan were opened. The educational curriculums were Islamised and many Islamists were appointed to key government and administrative positions. The period also witnessed the active promotion of Wahhabism, a puritanical version of Salafi

Islam, in Pakistan through funding of various madrassas and organisations from the Middle East. Much has been written on the mushrooming of radical madrassas with links to jihadist groups, such as Jamia Haqqanis (which is the Alma Mater of several jihadist leaders including the founder leader of the Afghan Taliban Mullah Muhammad Umar), Jamia Binoria in Karachi and the Lal (Red) Mosque in Islamabad, in Pakistan. However, very few studies have analysed the Islamisisation of higher education institutions in Pakistan. The IIUI was established in the same period (1980).[1]

Jihadist Ideologues in Campus

IIUI had several faculty members who were jihadist ideologues. One of them was Abdullah Yousaf Azzam, the founder of Maktab ul Khidmat al Mujaheeden wal Arabiya (MAK, Al-Qaeda's predecessor organization) who was part of the IIUI faculty until his death in a bomb blast in Peshawar in 1989.[2] A Palestinian by descent, Azzam had established a base in Peshawar to provide logistic support to arriving Arab Mujahedeen.[3]

Azzam secured a teaching position at the IIUI in 1984. He taught Islamic Sharia law and jurisprudence for a number of years and was instrumental in revising and institutionalising the curricula of other Islamic faculty courses.[4] To date, Azzam's Fatwas and writings remain as the standard text material for jihadists all over the world. He provided seed money to create at least three jihadist terrorist organisations, namely Hamas, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Al-Qaeda.

Another important jihadi ideologue who taught at the IIUI was Najmuddin Faraj Ahmad (aka Mullah Krekar), an Iraqi Kurd

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[1] Official Website of International Islamic University, Islamabad
http://www.iiuIIUIIIUI.edu.pk/index.php?page_id=30
[2] Aryn Baker, "Who Killed Abdullah Azzam?", *Time*, June 18, 2009,
http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1902809_1902810_1905173,00.html
[3] Discussions with Mohammad Amir Rana, Director Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, and a renowned security analyst on September 14, 2016, in Islamabad
[4] Khaled Ahmed, "Transformation of Al-Qaeda", *Criterion Quarterly*, Volume 3, No 3, November 20, 2012, http://www.criterion-quarterly.com/transformtion-of-al-qaeda/

who later founded Ansar al-Islam, an Al-Qaeda affiliate in Iraq. Besides his teaching experience at the IIUI, Krekar also worked as an ideologue for jihadists.[5] In 2001, Krekar established Ansar al-Islam in his native Iraq and later moved to Norway where he was granted asylum and later naturalised. In 2014, he pledged allegiance to IS.[6]

Islamist ideologues such as the blind Shaikh Omar Abdul Rehman (later convicted for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing) and Ahmad Khdr, the Egyptian-Canadian Islamist killed in a US drone strike in in 2009, have taught at the IIUI. For years, Abdul Basit Abdul Karim (aka Ramzi Yousaf) remained the most notorious IIUI student due to his involvement in the 1993 WTC bombing, and the abortive Bojinka plot which included the assassination plot against Pope John Paul in Manila and plans to blow up 11 US-bound planes from Asia.[7] (Yousaf was convicted and imprisoned for life in the US.)

In 2013, a former IIUI lecturer, Irtyaz Gilani from the faculty of engineering, was arrested from the suburbs of Islamabad for being part of an Al-Qaeda cell planning to attack key installations and government buildings in Islamabad. Besides recovering arms and ammunitions, the police also recovered a small drone from his house.[8]

Links with Jihadism

The more ominous development was the emergence of an Al-Qaeda cell in Islamabad in 2013 comprising of IIUI students. During the post-arrest investigation, it was discovered that the cell had carried out attacks in collusion with Al-Qaeda since 2007. The cell was headed by Abdullah Omar, 24, a student of Islamic Sharia law at

IIUI, and son of a former military officer Colonel Abbasi.[9] He was assisted by another IIUI student of Sharia law Hammad Adil.[10] Other members of the cell also include Haris Khan and two brothers Saad and Fahd and Tanveer.[11]

The father of the ring leader, Omar Abdullah has a history of strong links with Al-Qaeda. His father Colonel Abbasi had been convicted for facilitating the stay of Khalid Shaikh Mohammad in an upscale neighborhood of Rawalpindi, a garrison town that houses Pakistan army's headquarters. On a tip off from the US, Pakistani intelligence arrested Abbasi,[12] who was later court martialed and sentenced to six months' prison.[13]

During the investigation following his arrest, Abdullah revealed his father's jihadist connections, his association with JI and his education at the IIUI that contributed to his recruitment in Al-Qaeda. Abdullah was part of the Al-Qaeda's network in Rawalpindi that attacked the Friday prayer gathering at the Parade Lane Mosque in 2010. It was frequented by retired and serving military officers,[14] and the attack left forty officers dead, including one Major General and one Brigadier.[15]

Two brothers, Hammad Adil and Adnan Adil, who were IIUI students of Sharia law, were also part of the Al-Qaeda Islamabad cell. The Adil brothers received training at a joining training camp of Al-Qaeda and the Pakistani

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[5] He was expelled from Pakistan on the protest of Turkish government.
[6] Anders Holt Johansen, Sindre Granly Medalen and Oda Leraan Skjetnesindre, "Slik styrte Krekar terrornettverke", *Dagbladet Nyheter*, November 12, 2015,
thttp://www.dagbladet.no/2015/11/12/nyheter/innenriks/terror/mulla_krekar/trusler/41921802/
[7] Op Cit Abbas http://pique.pk/profiling-the-IIUIi-the-kingdoms-got-clout/
[8] Asad Haroon, "Al-Qaeda presence in Islamabad and has sleeping cells, says a report of government of Pakistan", *Dispatch News*, February 19, 2014,
http://www.dnd.com.pk/al-qaeeda-lakshar-jhangvi-strongest-presence-islamabad-says-government-pakistan/58954

[9] Abdullah's father Colonel Abbasi was involved in assassination attempts on General Pervez Musharraf and providing safe havens to 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammad at a residence of Jamaat-e-Islami local leader Abdul Qudoos in Rawalpindi.
[10] Kamran Adil also remained an activist of Jamaat's student union at IIUI before joining police service
[11] Ashraf Javed, "SP suspended after brother's arrest on terror links", *Nation*, Islamabad, September 6, 2013
[12] "TTP assassin becomes a breathing corpse, given bail", *News*, Islamabad, July 19, 2014
[13] "Al-Qaeda activist arrested in murder of Benazir case prosecutor", *Dawn*, Islamabad, June 14, 2013
[14] "Drone deaths underline JI's Jihadi links" *News International*, November 12, 2014,
https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/641815-drone-deaths-underline-ji's-jihadi-links
[15] "List of people killed at Parade Lane attack" https://jazba.wordpress.com/2009/12/04/names-of-those-who-embraced-shahadat-in-parade-lane-mosque-attack/

Taliban in North Waziristan and later moved back to Islamabad on the orders of Al-Qaeda. They were in charge of the logistics of the cell.

Until its elimination in 2013, the Islamabad cell was involved in the targeted assassinations of Federal Minister for Minorities Shahbaz Bhatti, prosecutor of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Choudhry Zulfiqar Ali, former President General Pervez Musharraf (2012), suicide bombing of the Danish Embassy, and burning of NATO convoys at two different terminals in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.[16] The cell members also planned to assassinate the chief of Pakistan's premier intelligence agency using a suicide bomber but the plan could not be executed.[17]

Al-Qaeda's longstanding links with IIUI students hit the headlines once again when the deputy head of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), Al-Qaeda's South Asian affiliate, Ustaz Ahmed Farooq was killed in a US drone strike in North Waziristan in April 2015. Farooq was a graduate of IIUI[18] who later moved to tribal areas to join Al-Qaeda, where he was eliminated along with fifty other militants during a US drone attack.[19]

The authorities took firmer actions after the discovery of Al-Qaeda's Islamabad Cell consisting of IIUI students. In May 2015, *The Express Tribune* reported that an intelligence agency had several concerns regarding activities in IIUI. In a letter to IIUI, the agency stated that *"[The IIUI] intentionally promotes sectarian doctrine at its campus….[and] that the administration and faculty of IIUI is intentionally promoting Salafi, Takfiri and*

Ikhwani doctrines, whereas Pakistan is fighting the demon of terrorism, incubated and abetted by the same doctrines." [20]

Conclusion

The case study of IIUI illustrates the growing problem of youth radicalization at universities, colleges and other higher education institutions in Pakistan. For instance, the killing of Mashal Khan, a student of Abdul Wali Khan University, on fake blasphemy charges by a raging mob of university students in 2016, and the more recent arrests of Jamaat Ansar Al-Shariah, an Al-Qaeda linked militant outfit, operatives from the NED and Karachi universities, among others, underscore the need for immediate course correction. In this respect, the implementation of the country's first Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) policy formulated by the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) is highly welcome development. Likewise, a revision of the current educational curricula and a broader involvement of both the Higher Education Commission and the Ministry of Education in the affairs of universities, are equally important.

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[16] Author's discussions with senior police officers and investigating officers about the cases registered against Hammad Adil Cell, June 5, 2014, Islamabad
[17] "Al-Qaeda mastermind in Punjab", *News International*, September 19, 2013, https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/455618-al-qaeda-mastermind-in-punjab
[18] "Al-Qaeda confirms killing of Qari Imran, Ahmad Farooq", *News International*, April 13, 2015, https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/11968-al-qaeda-confirms-killing-of-qari-imran-ahmad-farooq
[19] Tahir Khan, "Death from above: Unmanned war dents al Qaeda's S Asia franchise", *Express Tribune*, April 13, 2015, http://tribune.com.pk/story/869051/death-from-above-unmanned-war-dents-al-qaedas-s-asia-franchise/

[20] Riazul Haq, "Questionable activities: IIUIIIUII promoting extremist doctrines, says intelligence agency", *Express Tribune*, May 13, 2015, http://tribune.com.pk/story/885224/questionable-activities-IIUIIIUIi-promoting-extremist-doctrines-says-intelligence-agency/

Violent Extremism and Far-Right Radicalism in Australia: A Psychosocial Perspective

Jade Hutchinson

The resurgence of far-right extremists in Australia can negatively affect the Australian Muslim community and efforts to counter violent extremism. There is therefore a need to revisit the interplay of factors and narratives involved in the radicalisation of Islamists and certain elements of the Australian far right. Without the necessary psycho-social insights informing these initiatives, singling out the Arab and Muslim communities can possibly lead to resentment and lone-wolf attacks by self-radicalised 'jihadists', besides the radicalisation and recruitment into far-right extremism.

Introduction

Australia is home to diverse cultures, languages and religions. It has a relatively low level of violent extremist activity, even amidst rising terrorist threats overseas. However, the resurgence of far-right radical elements and the active propagation of their agenda can potentially change the threat spectrum in the country if the delicate socio-political equilibrium is not maintained through corrective measures.

The Australian Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice Report defines violent extremism as 'individuals or groups that seek to change a society or government's policies by threatening or using violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals'[1].

In Australia, acts of Islamist militancy are driven by foreign terrorist organisations that are linked to local lone-wolf cells and actors. On the one hand, Australia's unique geographical location distances it from terrorist hotspots and compels militant organisations to spread ideological influence through social media.

On the other hand, the history of Far-Right Radicalism (FRR) in Australia has been both inherently reactive and proactive. Although FRR is heterogeneous, it centralises around neo-Nazism, anti-immigration, Islamophobia, preservation of Western values and cultural purity at the societal and state level.[2] These include quintessentially ethnocentric groups (e.g. Blood and Honour, Combat 18, United Patriots et al.) that carry out violence within Australian society.[3]

Presently, Australia is susceptible to the FRR wave that is witnessed in both North America and Europe, with a proliferation of new far-right radical groups. FRR groups engage in acts of violence and xenophobic communication and are fixated on Muslim communities. Online groups continue to spread far-right values (as mentioned above) and coordinate attacks. In addition, some far-right values and principles share similarities with the right-wing narrative and policies of some politicians.[4] This assimilation of Islamophobic principles between the political and social spheres can encourage policy and social movements that might further marginalise Muslim communities.

Australian security concerns

Some conservative and far-right Australian groups view Australian-Muslims as potential

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[1] Shandon Harris-Hogan, "Violent Extremism In Australia: An Overview," *Trends & Issues In Crime And Criminal Justice no 491(2017) :1*

[2] Geoff Dean, Peter Bell and Zarina Vakhitova, "Right-Wing Extremism In Australia: The Rise Of The New Radical Right," *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 11*, 2 (2016):* 121-142.

[3] Harris-Hogan, "Violent Extremism In Australia: An Overview," 5.

[4] James, S. 2005, "The policing of right-wing violence in Australia". *Police Practice and Research* 6 (2): 103-119; Dean, G. Bell, P. Vakhitova, Z. October 2016. "Right-wing extremism in Australia: the rise of the new radical right." *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 11 (2): 121-142.

threats to national security. Targeting race and religion, these groups demand the abolishment of multicultural and social cohesive policies by advocating bans on immigration, entitlement to welfare and wearing of *burqas* (head to toe veil to cover females) and *niqab* (face cover) in Australia. Such racial and religious profiling undermines the trust, cooperative efforts and efficacy of the already tenuous Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives.[5]

Australian security and intelligence agencies are concerned about the radicalisation of Australian-Muslim youth. Due to their Islamic roots, the FRR groups frame Australian-Muslim youths negatively as the religious 'other', resulting in some of them being excluded from the broader society. These narratives construct a narrow worldview that fosters low self-esteem, insecurity and alienation among targeted Muslims. Consequently, vulnerable Muslim youths could also develop an urge for alternate narratives of radical Islamist groups that attempt to offer them a sense of belonging.

Another area of security concern is the return of pro-IS foreign fighters following the defeat of the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group in Iraq and Syria. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) has estimated that around 100-110 Australian foreign fighters were lured to participate in the Syrian and Iraq civil wars [6]. When IS affiliates advanced into Marawi, it produced propaganda that targeted at Australian foreign fighters.[7] With at least 40 foreign fighters of mixed ethnicity identified during the siege on Marawi, the destination for Australian foreign fighters is becoming closer to home, in Southeast Asia.[8]

Psychosociological Perspective of Far-Right and Radicalisation of Muslim Communities

From a psychosociological perspective,[9] as ideologies and values of two alternate groups are reinforced by events and identities, it necessitates a stronger individual emotional and moral investment in favour of the side that they can best relate to. Hence, as the attraction for individuals to become committed members to an opposing side increases, the empathy and rationality for the opposing side decreases.[10]

Particular social and political events can cumulatively create a pattern of thoughts and emotions in social/ethnic sub-groups, by developing a sense of sympathy for the larger-identity that is founded on imagined and real grievances.[11] It can be argued that by attempting to appropriate dogmatic thoughts against Arab and Muslim communities, the FRR is creating the foundational nodes in Australia's thought network. Contemporaneously, transnational terrorist groups claim responsibility for attacks, as well as support for the individual(s) in plotting and executing these attacks. These thought networks are critical for the Australian intelligence and law enforcement agencies to identify as it indirectly fosters the marginalisation of Muslim communities. If tensions are successfully eased between and within Muslim communities, it is likely to positively

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[5] Adrain Cherney and Jason Hartley, "Community Engagement To Tackle Terrorism And Violent Extremism: Challenges, Tensions And Pitfalls." *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy* 27, 7 (2017) : 750-763.
[6] Andrew Zammit, "Australian Jihadism in the Age of the Islamic State," *CTC Sentinel* 10, 3 (2017): 23-30.
[7] Sam McPhe, "'Burn Them In Their Homes': Australian ISIS Fighter Urges Followers To Launch Terror Attacks On Home Soil Using Trucks, Nail Guns And Petrol In Vile Propaganda Video." *Daily Mail Australia,* August 8, 2017, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4769918/Australian-ISIS-fighter-appears-new-propaganda-video.html (accessed October 24, 2017)
[8] Tom Allard, "Ominous Signs Of An Asian Hub For Islamic State In The Philippines." *Reuters,* May 30,

2017, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-militants-foreigners/ominous-signs-of-an-asian-hub-for-islamic-state-in-the-philippines-idUSKBN18Q0OO (accessed September 18, 2017)
[9] Psychosociological analysis utilises the evaluative perceptions in both psychology and sociology to gain insight into the interaction of social relations and cognitive behaviour on an individual's wellbeing and function.
[10] Howard Bloom, "*The Lucifer Principle: A Scientific Expedition into the Forces of History" (New York: Grove Atlantic, 1997)*; Lawrence LeShan, *The Psychology Of War: Comprehending Its Mystique And Its Madness* (New York: Allworth Press); David Frankfurter, "The Construction of Evil and the Violence of Purification,' in the In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence,* edited by Jerryson, M. Juergensmeyer, M. and Kitts, (New York: Oxford University Press 1:15)
[11] Philip Barnard and John Teasdale, *Affect, Cognition, and Change: Re-modelling Depressive Thought (*London: Psychology Press, 1995)

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curtail the radicalisation of Muslim youth, production of foreign fighters and the rise in far-right violence.

In addition, FRR groups claim to be the self-appointed guardians of Australian values from 'anti-Australian' identities. Public displays such as the June 2017 'Australia Pride March'[12] in Melbourne, aim to encourage the Australian society to perceive opposing identities, namely Muslim communities, as perceived threats to national security and individualism.[13] Public announcements of foiled terrorist attacks echo and re-echo this separation of members into potential members or threats based on their constructed identity alone.[14]

This psychological pathway can be manipulated by terrorist groups to inspire lone-wolf attacks. Particularly due to IS's rapidly declining strength in Syria and Iraq, Australia and other Western countries will likely witness a *reverse-hijra* (foreign fighters returning to source countries). This increases the probability of IS supported lone-wolf attacks by returnees.

However, FRR groups may share a symbiotic relationship with Islamic extremist groups in their counter-intuitive production of radicalised individuals and ideal of belonging. If the aim of transnational terrorist networks is to recruit vulnerable members and gain global support, the Australian FRR may offer a psychological pathway for Australians to do so. The same psychological pathway

manipulated by terrorist groups allures proponents of far-right values towards radicalised behaviour by FRR groups.

Subsequently, although IS and FRR members oppose each other's cultural perception and intentions, their avenues to solidarity and encouragement of radicalism within the Australian public has the potential to be symmetrical.[15]

Way forward

To overcome violent extremism, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) has designed and exercised Community Liaison Teams (CLT) to develop partnerships with community leaders, enhance community relations with the AFP and adopt strategies to improve dialogue with Muslim communities[16].

The Australian Government also attaches significance to integration of 'Australian' cultural values and practices over the inclusive model of multiculturalism. For example, immigrants who are applying for Australian residency or citizenship have to take an Australian knowledge and cultural citizenship test in English and give a pledge to successfully proceed with the immigration process.[17]

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[12] Jesicca Hill, ""Weapons Found At 'Australia Pride' And Anti-Racism Protest In Melbourne." *The Huffington Post Australia,* June 25 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2017/06/24/australian-pride-and-anti-racism-protesters-clash-in-melbourne_a_22979862/ (Accessed October 10, 2017).

[13] Anne Aly, "Anne Aly: Reclaim Australia Is The Product Of Rising Right-Wing Extremism." *The Guardian, July 20, 2015,* https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jul/20/anne-aly-reclaim-australia-is-the-product-of-rising-right-wing-extremism (accessed September 14, 2017)

[14] William Housley and Richard Fitzgerald, "Membership Categorization, Culture And Norms In Action. *"Discourse and Society, (2009); Dennis Day, "*Membership Categorization Analysis." *University of Southern Denmark, (1992); Elinor Ochs,* "Constructing Social Identity: A Language Socialization Perspective." *Research on Language & Social Interaction* 26, 3 (1993): 287-306*.*

[15] Julia Ebner, ""The Surprising Relationship Between Islamist Extremists And White Nationalists," *Prospect Magazine,* October 6, 2017, https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/politics/the-surprising-relationship-between-islamist-extremists-and-white-nationalists (accessed October 8, 2017) ; Julia Ebner, "*The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far-Right Extremism (*London: .B Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017)

[16] Australian Human Rights Commission, Australian Multicultural Foundation, "Building Trust: Working With Muslim Communities In Australia: A Review Of The Community Policing Partnership Project", 2010, https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/2010-building-trust (Accessed 18th September 2017)

[17]Sev Ozdowskiam, "Australia's Multiculturalism – Success Or Not?" Presented to the *Sydney Institute on 9th March 2016,* https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1055064/2016-03-11_Australian_Multiculturalism_-_Address_to_the_Sydney_Institute_-_Final.pdf (*accessed October 22, 2017);* , Australian Citizenship pledge is as follows: *'From this time forward I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will*

There have been a number of similar initiatives of varying success, and these include a de-radicalisation hotline, online websites and community focused programmes such as the Australian Football League youth engagement programme.[18] However, these initiatives are structured without any appropriate indicators to test and evaluate its success.

The Australian Government, intelligence and law enforcement agencies need to address the issue of Islamic profiling, inequality and hostility towards and between sub-groups based on assumed identity and values. Otherwise Australia would be gradually offering Machiavellian opportunities for terrorist groups to attain political objectives in Australia, which would slowly weaken its social and political fabric and undermine its CVE efforts. This in turn forms a susceptibility to deviant ideologies, and further tenders the radicalisation of individuals both within and outside Australia.

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uphold and obey'. Available at https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Citi/pathways-processes/Citi/Australian-citizenship-pledge, accessed September 22, 2017.

[18] Amelia Johns, Michele Grossman and Kevin McDonald, "More Than a Game': The Impact of Sport-Based Youth Mentoring Schemes on Developing Resilience toward Violent Extremism." *Social Inclusion* 2, 2 (2013): 57-70; James Thomas, "Deradicalization Helpline Step Together Receives 'Around Five Calls In Two Months.' *ABC News*. September 28, 2017, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-28/helpline-set-up-to-combat-radicalisation-five-calls-two-months/8988432 (accessed October 29, 2017); Step Together Website.*New South Wales Government*, 2017, https://steptogether.com.au, (Accessed October 29 2017)

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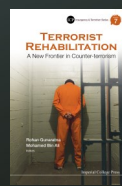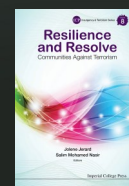## STAFF PUBLICATIONS
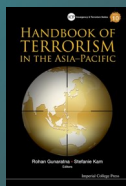
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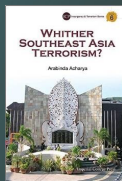(Imperial College Press, 2016)
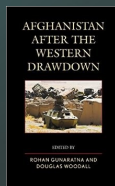
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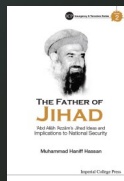(Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015)

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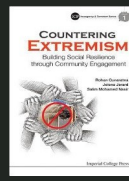(Imperial College Press, 2015)

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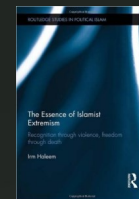(Imperial College Press, 2015)

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