

Addressing the Challenges of the Expanding ISIS Influence



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RADICALIZATION IN EAST ASIA

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF THE EXPANDING ISIS INFLUENCE

**Conference Proceedings
(Abridged)**

EDSA Shangri-la Hotel
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NARRATIVE REPORTS written by Dennis Quilala (Assistant Professor, UP CSSP) and Lea Marie Diño (Publications Assistant, UP CIDS). Based on the conference held last May 15, 2015 and organized by the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID) in cooperation with S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) of Nanyang Technological University, University of the Philippines College of Law, Mindanao State University (MSU), and University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS).

About the Editors

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Welcome Messages

Dr. Santanina T. Rasul, MNSA

Former Senator of the Philippines

Adviser, Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy

Dr. Santanina Rasul recognized and welcomed the speakers, panelists, and guests. Dr. Rasul expressed her hope for fruitful results as she stated that much work has to be done to stave off the threat of radicalization in the country, particularly in the Bangsamoro areas. She pointed out the existence and activities of Muslim groups, like the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), that have established links with the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). The JI aims to establish a pan-Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia and some parts of Australia. The BIFF and the Abu Sayyaf have also announced their allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), according to Dr. Rasul. What is common among these terrorist groups, she noted, is their use of terroristic methods which, among others, include beheadings, kidnap for ransom or exchange of prisoners, and high-profile bombings of “soft” targets such as population centers. Furthermore, their presence is pronounced in southern Philippines and noticeable in the rest of the Philippine archipelago.

According to Dr. Rasul, poverty, illiteracy, bad governance, wide availability of loose firearms, and non-enforcement of the rule of law in southern Philippines created a fertile ground for radicalization to take root. Finally, she reiterated her call for collating the perspectives and inputs, making an assessment of the extent of radicalization in the Philippines, identifying the factors that contribute to radicalization, and creating an action agenda to avoid the threat.

Dr. Macapado Muslim

President, Mindanao State University

Dr. Macapado Muslim thanked the convenors of the conference and described it as timely and urgent as there is a need to understand radicalization and to address the challenges it poses, and called the conference a big statement on the armed conflicts happening in the world today. According to Dr. Muslim, since there is a continually widening and intensifying domestic and global connectivity, the number and intensity of armed conflicts will grow further in the coming years. He used as an example the emergence of ISIS which is a major security threat to the whole world. ISIS is more threatening to countries like the Philippines, Thailand, and the rest of East Asia where there are internal conflicts involving their Muslim minority constituencies. Dr. Muslim saw an initiative to insulate individuals, regions, and countries from the influence of ISIS as a strategy, along

with addressing the grievances of Muslim minorities in countries that seem to appeal to ISIS' emergence. He highlighted the passage of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) which provides a regional governance system, addresses both major political and economic redistribution issues, and important religious and cultural identity needs and grievances of contemporary Moros as an important step in insuring our country from the threat of ISIS.

Finally, Dr. Muslim emphasized the need for understanding radicalization in East Asia and the challenges of ISIS influence. Understanding these, he said, will help enhance the understanding of the systemic character and multidimensional nature of the Bangsamoro struggle, and the urgency of finding a non-violent, political settlement formula, which is what the proposed bill offers.

Prof. Danilo Concepcion

Dean, UP College of Law

Prof. Danilo Concepcion expressed his gratitude to the participants of the conference on behalf of the UP College of Law and UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UPCIDS). Prof. Concepcion pointed out the current preoccupation of the Congress—the passage of the BBL, which was the result of negotiations between the Philippine government and representatives of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and other groups that have been lobbying for autonomy and peace. Prof. Concepcion said that the peace process should continue, but in a framework that recognizes constitutional principles and processes. He noted that a good foundation for a Bangsamoro region cultivates a community resilient against the lure of extremist groups like ISIS and JI.

According to Prof. Concepcion, UP has always been active in holding timely discussions of issues of national and international significance. He described the UP Law Center as having provided objective legal analyses of government policies, legislative measures, and judicial pronouncements on various issues. He called the UPCIDS as the think-tank of the university that engages in basic and policy-oriented research in critical fields. He thanked Ambassador Ong Keng Yong and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies for sharing their comprehensive analysis of the threats posed by extremist movements that seek to use ethnic and religious conflicts which affect not only the Philippines but the entire East Asia. He advocated for a better understanding of why Islamic extremist movements have established their presence in the region and how we can counter their possible attacks.

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong

Former ASEAN Secretary-General

Executive Deputy Chairman, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Ambassador Yong thanked the convenors for inviting RSIS to participate in the conference then explained the activities of the RSIS, and added that it has many different centers and programs on security issues and political violence. He expressed his hope that, through the conference, the participants will be able to share perspectives and knowledge. He acknowledged the school's six specialists and experts from the US, UK, Philippines, and Singapore who will be presenting their perspectives and knowledge on the issue. According to Ambassador Yong, there are two messages for the conference: one is on radicalization and extremism in societies and human involvement, and the other is that radicalization and extremism are not simply local law and order problems. He stated that RSIS sees all activities as part of the global situation—what is happening in one part of the world can affect another part of the global community.

According to Ambassador Yong, there is a common interest among concerned nations: to look for the solutions and to understand these issues so we can help each other as we are part of the globalized world. The moral tragedy is how radicalization and extremism use religion to justify causing harm to society. Finally, Ambassador Yong called for an increase in intellectual capital which enables us to look at the situation in each respective area, and to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security not only in the country but in the Asian region. He expressed his interest in the exchange of views and discussion in the conference.

Executive Summary

Interconnectedness and Hope

The Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) of the Nanyang Technological University, the University of the Philippines Law Center (UPLC), the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UPCIDS), and the Mindanao State University (MSU) organized a two-session conference titled “Radicalization in East Asia” on May 15, 2015 at the EDSA Shangri-la Hotel. This conference captured a comprehensive discussion on the threat of international radicalization to East Asia.

Dr. Santanina Rasul, former senator of the Philippines and now adviser of PCID, opened the conference by expressing her warmest welcome to the speakers, guests, and participants of the event. She went on and discussed the common link among the Muslim terrorist groups concentrated in the southern Philippines and their political objective of establishing terroristic activities in the region. The succeeding speakers spoke about the serious global, regional, and local threats posed by radicalization. Dr. Macapado Muslim, President of the Mindanao State University, stated that given the intensifying domestic and global connectivity, ISIS will be more threatening to countries like the Philippines, Thailand, and the rest of East Asia where there are internal conflicts involving their Muslim minority constituencies. Giving an optimistic view, Prof. Danilo Concepcion, Dean of the UP College of Law, said that the foundation being built for a Bangsamoro region will help cultivate a community resistant to the allure of extremist groups like ISIS and JI. Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, former ASEAN Secretary General and now the Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS, spoke of the necessity to increase intellectual capital which enables critical thinking and to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security not only in the country but in the Asian region. These speakers, in their welcome remarks, all agreed on the need to piece together perspectives and inputs in assessing the extent of radicalization in the Philippines and to create an action agenda to avoid the threat.

Six experts from RSIS discussed their presentations in line with the theme of the conference. The first three of them emphasized the strong correlation of terrorist activities in the different parts of the world to domestic politics, and how issues in the island of Mindanao could have implications for the region. Ahmed Hashim discussed the growing threat of ISIS as a product of ideology, conflict, and deprivation. Its more radical position compared to other groups need to be seen as an international concern. A growing number of Southeast Asians are reportedly joining ISIS in the Middle East, and they are deemed to be

dangerous upon their return to the region. Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines are the most vulnerable states to this trend.

On the other hand, Bilveer Singh and Joseph Franco elaborated on the spillover effects of the instability in Mindanao and the attractiveness of a conflict area for terrorists. These carry serious consequences for the international community and for ASEAN in particular, which include a resumption of armed struggle, a more extremist approach by militant groups, and other impacts aggravating the bigger picture of terrorism at the local, regional, and international level. It is, therefore, the position of the speakers to give importance and support to the peace process in the region.

Three Filipino speakers gave their reactions to the topics discussed by the RSIS academics. Professor of Political Science at the University of the Philippines Diliman, Dr. Clarita Carlos, pointed out that radicalization starts with the individual at a very young age, which she claimed was spurred by a feeling of alienation from society. In looking at radicalization, she recommended the need to give attention not only to states and groups but also to these vulnerable individuals. Ms. Antonina Leong, special assistant to the National Security Adviser, stated that the influence of ISIS to the Philippines is still uncertain given that, according to the National Security Council, there is no solid evidence yet of such a phenomenon. However, she highlighted the fact that this situation is troubling and is not being discounted by the council. Brigadier General Carlito Galvez Jr., Chair of the GPH Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH), countered Ms. Leong's statement, saying that the threat of ISIS in the Philippines already exists with ISIS-inspired actions of the Abu Sayyaf at the local and regional levels. He noted that the ongoing peace process can limit the space for terrorist proliferation in the country, and that therefore there must be support for the ongoing peace accords.

In the afternoon session, the discussion was on reintegration, religious rehabilitation, and sustainable peacebuilding programs as part of the effort to address the proliferation of radicalization. Kumar Ramakrishna identified ideology, specifically Al-Qaedaism, as the key to understanding radicalization. While material factors are important, the realm of the mind and the role of ideas are critical in resolving the potential threat of radicalization. Alistair Cook identified the importance of peacebuilding. He gave examples of models that can be used by the Philippines in pursuit of the peace process. Lessons should be culled from cases in Aceh and Myanmar. Hope, therefore, can be brought about by programs of de-radicalization and rehabilitation of former militants. Muhammad Saiful Alam Shah Bin Sudiman talked about the cases in Singapore, the United States, and Belgium that could help in understanding the best ways to curb the influence of radical ideologies. However, he said that it is important for reintegration and religious rehabilitation programs to be adjusted to local conditions. The roles of different domestic stakeholders and international community should be harnessed to achieve peace and prevent radicalization, he added.

Another set of Filipino speakers gave their reactions, comments, and insights on the topics presented. Prof. Moner Bajunaid pointed to programs of the National Ulama Conference of the Philippines (NUCP) and PCID as part of the local efforts in peacebuilding. He emphasized the significant impact of the Action for Madrasah-based Advocacy and Learning (AMAL) project to the Muslim community in fostering a more fertile ground for peace in the region. Mr. Edicio dela Torre, board member of Balay Mindanao, told of how his experiences in reintegrating former detainees shed light on the chance of these people to live normal lives; that it only takes a matter of changing the current discriminatory narratives of people into more inclusive perspectives. Lastly, Ms. Maria Ressa, CEO of Rappler, discussed how social media is used as a primary tool for the growth and spread of ISIS. She noted that the widespread use of the Internet by young people builds the bridge for these people to be influenced by such terrorist groups.

In closing the conference, Retired Lieutenant General Ben Dolorfino expressed his deep appreciation to the panel of experts from RSIS and to the Filipino reactors in sharing their knowledge on radicalization and violent extremism in Muslim communities, on the challenge of ISIS influence in East Asia, on ASEAN responses to terrorism, and on the best practices in conflict resolution, rehabilitation, reintegration, and peacebuilding. He hoped that this conference can serve as a wake-up call on the urgency of the situation.

Radicalization is both a challenge and a threat to the Philippines and the international community. There exists the appalling interconnectedness of terrorism at the international scale with the regional and local levels. Nonetheless, there is hope in reintegration, religious rehabilitation, and sustainable peacebuilding programs in its mitigation.

SESSION ONE

The International and Regional Context

Introduction

by ATTY. HERMINIO HARRY L. ROQUE JR.

Director, Institute of International Legal Studies, UP Law Center

Atty. Harry Roque welcomed the participants to the first session of the conference. He started the discussion with the question on whether groups such as Al-Qaeda should be governed by international law as a result of the 9/11 attacks. It had taken 15 years for this issue of characterization to be resolved—how these criminal groups would be treated and under which jurisdiction they would fall, and the special mechanisms of international law regarding serious crimes against international order. The result is now seen: international law now governs Al-Qaeda and the Taliban as their crimes affect the international community. He also noted that these groups' criminal activities are now centered not only in specific regions but the international community. Today, these groups have evolved and have revealed more complicated issues in international terrorism as manifested by the establishment of ISIS. Atty. Roque noted ISIS's use of force with unprecedented intensity, and its direct engagement with sovereign states.

Atty. Roque then introduced the three panelists who are experts in defense issues, insurgency and counterinsurgency, terrorism and counter-terrorism, and the three reactors who will respond to the panelists' presentations.

The Islamic State in Southeast Asia:

Assessment of the Threat

by AHMED HASHIM

Military Studies Program, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Dr. Ahmed Hashim started his presentation by explaining the genesis of ISIS. It began with the insurgency during the Iraq War in 2003, which involved a large number of groups besides the major groups of Al-Qaeda and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (AMZ). One of these groups was the Jihadists which bifurcated to Iraqi Local Jihadists and Salafi Jihadists. Dr. Hashim focused on the latter and its ideology which, in turn, is related to ISIS, which he believed is important to ISIS. Not everybody is ideologically motivated or has a total understanding of ISIS's ideology, Dr. Hashim claimed. He used as an example the two

British-Indian Muslims who were apprehended in an airport in Turkey and were found with a book *Islam for Dummies*.

The reigning ideology is Salafi jihadism, which fosters the idea of the Muslim community returning to the practice of their ancestors to correct errant Muslims. Salafists also believe that Islam is under attack, internally and externally, and that armed jihad is necessary to defend true Islam. According to Dr. Hashim, the implementation of Sharia is being ingrained in their online publicity materials, and that the problem lies in man-made democratic laws; one declaration said that democracy is the worst evil for a true believer. In ISIS's world view, there are no rules except those of God's. In an attempt to increase their reach to other insurgent groups and rebrand their group, AMZ joined Al-Qaeda in 2004. However, Al-Qaeda leaders viewed AMZ's network as pathological. Al-Zarqawi's tendency to target innocent civilians and create a sectarian war with the Shi'a population of Iraq created problems between him and Al-Qaeda as this strays from the goal of evicting Americans from Iraq. ISIS was defeated in 2009-2010 as a result of the defection of the majority of Iraqi insurgents from ISIS or its predecessor, which attacked the Sunni tribes and interfered with Iraq's so-called import-export business. The development of American counterinsurgency and strategy, and the surge of troops are also factors in this defeat.

However, according to Dr. Hashim, ISIS restructured and reorganized in the following years. A bleeding out of Sunni insurgency occurred into ISIS, and a number of the insurgents who were formerly Ba'thists became Sufis, members of the Islamic Party of Iraq, and Salafi jihadists and supported the rebirth of ISIS under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Under al-Baghdadi, ISIS had a hierarchical and decentralized organizational structure. Dr. Hashim pointed out that though it seems contradictory, ISIS believes that an organizational structure such as its own allows decentralized operation and control, command, and communications among the hierarchy, thereby fostering greater resiliency in conducting operations. He also described ISIS as a hybrid organization as it is not only a terroristic group but also a guerrilla-type and semi-conventional organization that moves up and down the spectrum of conflict and warfare, which makes it difficult for state security forces to deal with them. ISIS has what he calls a "proto-state structure" and has a paradoxical millenarian tendency.

Despite all this, Dr. Hashim claimed that ISIS is not without any problem; it is facing organizational challenges, command and control issues, and hubris and strategic overreach. However, what springs from the emergence of ISIS is the question of the decline of Al-Qaeda.

Dr. Hashim then discussed the implication of ISIS to Southeast Asia. The looming significant problem is the threat of returnees, which can create a path to violent action besides the "lone wolf" phenomenon through networked cells (cells of like-minded experienced militants) and the revitalization of moribund jihadi networks in Southeast Asia, or the creation of new groups. Countries at risk include Indonesia and Malaysia as these are

Islamic majority states that have security and politico-socio-economic challenges. The Philippines also has political and social problems, besides its issues with security. Singapore and Australia have security and law and order challenges. Criminal and non-criminal measures that can be undertaken by these countries, as suggested by Dr. Hashim, include those that can be implemented before the departure of would-be jihadists and upon their return.

Collapse of the Bangsamoro Peace Accords— What It Will Mean for ASEAN's Counter-Terrorism Efforts

by BILVEER SINGH

Centre for Excellence for National Security, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

The current conflict in the country is a massive tragedy, according to Dr. Bilveer Singh. He described its continuation as upsetting, and he put to light the result of the 17 years of negotiation. The Philippine government and people are at a crossroads and must decide what to do about it at once. Dr. Singh recounted his exchange with the principal recruiters of ISIS for Indonesia in Malaysia. We, the citizens, Dr. Singh claimed, are part of the problem as we have always been driven by issues of insurgency and terrorism. However, he regarded the BBL with great pride as it is a non-violent approach and promotes sharing the nation. One of the critical issues is preparation: what do we do so we cannot be struck by ISIS?

Dr. Singh narrated that in the 1990s, he participated in a conference on conflict resolution in the country and that he picked up from Edmundo Garcia (former UPCIDS research fellow) the idea that “peace is everybody’s business.” This prompted the question: what do we do? And considering everybody's perspective, do we look inward? Do we just blame them? Dr. Singh expressed his sympathy for the 44 fallen PNP-SAF officers, but he clarified that there were other lives lost as well and there is a potential for thousands more to be lost. Many societies have reached this level, like Mumbai. He believed that introspection is powerful and important and helps in forming strategic approaches. He then emphasized the cost of lives lost, saying that it is very great, and how it affects the upcoming election season, which again prompts a question: how do we move forward from the incident? He acknowledged the different aspects that come into play like personal, political, and economic factors. But upon seeing a newspaper headline on hostilities from the previous day, Dr. Singh said that there is a culture that needs to be changed.

The big issue of terrorism is not only confined to the Philippines but extends to the whole world as well. He again recounted the conference he attended in 1991, and he observed that there are things that remained the same while there are things that are changing. He used the Aceh province of Indonesia as an example where the Indonesian government and Acehnese rebels had reached a peace agreement.

Finally, Dr. Singh called for “closing” the “opening,” i.e., the looming threat of terrorism, because if nothing is done about it, people will get hurt. ISIS knows that the biggest threat to them in Southeast Asia is peace in Mindanao, because if Mindanao is secure, they will not be able to go to the country. Instead of seeing Mindanao as the next Afghanistan, Mindanao should be seen as the next Aceh whose peace process was successful. Should the negotiations with MILF and MNLF fail, the potential and possible consequence is a tragedy of massive proportions. The ASEAN is not known for its peacemaking mechanisms, but Dr. Singh pointed to the current Philippine situation as one of the few good processes for peace in the region.

Peace in Mindanao and Security in Maritime Southeast Asia

by JOSEPH FRANCO

Centre for Excellence for National Security, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Mr. Joseph Franco initially stated his stance and perspective which lean toward counterinsurgency and materialism and acknowledges that ideology is helpful in having a critical view of conflict in Mindanao. He began his presentation with the Mamasapano issue that, he revealed, was the locus of a recurring discourse pointing to Malaysia as being behind the incident apparently because Malaysians wanted to sabotage the peace process. He recalled his experience in coming across Philippine websites that contain such allegations, but noted that these claims came from Manila-based media. Mr. Franco also said there are policymakers who claim that having Malaysians as interlocutors is like letting the enemy know what weapons you have. In response to these, Mr. Franco admitted that Malaysia is partly involved with the MNLF, but there are other things that are not mentioned in the discourse—that it was the personal project of Sabah’s third Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha.

At the community level, the performance of the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team dispelled national-level perceptions in Manila. In his research, he also discovered that all the hate toward Malaysians were directed at Othman Razak, whom he described as a colorful and straightforward figure who came off as rude and arrogant to Philippine media.

According to Mr. Franco, the Philippine Human Development Report 2005 identifies economic deprivation as a key trigger; there are some areas that are too poor to revolt and fight, considering all the expenses that must be covered for weaponry and resources. This finding influenced internal security policy, the Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP). The World Bank also funded a Bangsamoro Conflict Monitoring System which came up with a report on the tendency of conflicts (in Bangsamoro areas) to happen horizontally (intergroup conflict) rather than top-down (MILF vs. AFP conflict). In his research, Dr. Franco found out that the BIFF is a parochial force, and that most of the clashes in BIFF-controlled areas happened during harvest and rainy seasons. There are also incidences of escalated family

conflicts that are reported in Manila as clashes between Christians and Muslims. He also explained that there are different factions of the Abu Sayyaf which others consider as just one group. The faction that pledged allegiance to ISIS is different from the one that had kidnapped two foreigners. The pledge works more in favor of the locals as the brand is considered an advantage. Mr. Franco considered the MILF as pragmatic.

Mr. Franco claimed that the idea of Bangsamoro does not have an intrinsically state-contesting aspect to it. Quoting Patricio Abinales, he explained that prior to martial law the idea of the Bangsamoro was used by the Philippine state to build a multicultural state, but that this was interrupted by certain events. The idea of Moro then became a tool for state-contestation rather than for state-building.

According to Mr. Franco, if the Mindanao peace process fails, the entire tri-boundary region (Mindanao, Celebes, and Sabah/Borneo) will be destabilized. He said that Zamboanga is the entry point for illicit weapons, and that Indonesian militants get their firearms from the General Santos/Davao corridor. If an unstable environment is created in Mindanao, a permissive environment for such activities will rise as well.

Malaysia has a positive role to play and has played in the peace process. He believed that if a single member-state of ASEAN can do well, the whole ASEAN can do more. ASEAN member-states should change from peacebuilding to providing socioeconomic development support. Finally, Mr. Franco said that peace in Mindanao cannot be attained through a magic bullet but through the collective and deliberate action of stakeholders.

Reaction

by DR. CLARITA R. CARLOS

Professor, University of the Philippines

Dr. Clarita Carlos first informed the audience that part of her reflection on the three presentations is moving the discourse from the nation-state to the individual, with political psychology being one of her specializations. She first posed the following questions: Where does radicalization come from? How does it become collective? According to Dr. Carlos, radicalization or extremism of any form starts within the individual. In varied contexts, radicalization starts with alienation of the self. She explained that alienation is a phenomenon in which there is powerlessness, meaninglessness, and normlessness. The individual no longer feels able to affect his or her surroundings, and this sense graduates to the forsaking of societal norms, and turns into violence. Violence starts in the individual and is reified in the collective.

According to Dr. Carlos, the denial of the “Other” is similar to discrimination. Denying others' existence because of their difference leads to deliberate destruction of

human life and resources. Dr. Carlos gave the conflict in Yemen between two branches of Islam represented by Iran and Saudi Arabia as an example where there is continued absence of opportunities for people there to live as human beings. Islands of radicalization result from alienation and violence which mark many corners of the world as unstable and unfit for human development. Through her research, Dr. Carlos found out that the rejection of the state starts in the socialization of the young, who are taught that there is sin and that there is the Other. The denigration of the Other becomes deeply entrenched and is manifested in poems, songs, and nursery rhymes.

Dr. Carlos said that the individual seeks recognition of the self, and the same opportunity to dream, to make something of himself, to education, and to become like any other individual in other societies. She noted that there is a lot to be done to solve this. That we are always in the level of the collective deprives the examination of the problem of the individual—Dr. Carlos saw this as a source of radicalization, mostly of the young who are robbed of a future. Radicalization and extremism, which Dr. Carlos believes should not be linked together, starts when the young feel a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and normlessness, and can be a fountainhead of collective insecurities.

Reaction

by MS. MA. ANTONINA S. LEONG

Special Assistant to National Security Adviser Cesar P. Garcia, Jr.

The threat posed by ISIS to the Philippines, according to Ms. Antonina Leong, is complex and uncertain. She explained that jihadism in the country is influenced by Indo-Malay jihadism which, in turn, is influenced by the global jihadist movement; thus, how ISIS will affect the Philippines will be dictated by the continued debate between what constitutes the enemy of Islam—the “near” enemy or the “far” enemy. According to Ms. Leong, the current situation that may affect the Philippines is dynamic and evolving. At this time Ms. Leong admitted that ISIS does not pose a direct security threat to the Philippines. ISIS has a narrow and parochial agenda: to overthrow governments in the Middle East, seize and maintain territories for the establishment of a caliphate, and defend itself from the US-led international coalition. As seen in its digital magazine, ISIS focuses on establishing religious legitimacy.

Ms. Leong claimed that in the country, there are only a few manifestations of ISIS influence. There are the videos, posted online, of local terrorists pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. There is no concrete evidence linking these pledges with terroristic events that occurred after these pledges were announced. Ms. Leong deduced that this attempt at rebranding was a way to obtain financial support, but that this does not guarantee membership in ISIS. Quoting an analyst, she said that religion is a motif of criminal activities, and not a motive. The ASG pledge did not affect other member-groups; BIFF's declaration of support to ISIS is supposedly a part of its propaganda to introduce itself as

part of the global JI movement and to call for support from local and foreign benefactors; and, the declaration of the Rajah Sulaiman Movement is an attempt to revive its organization. Furthermore, there are currently no credible reports of Filipino ISIS members. Should there actually be members, Leong added, they may be very few in comparison to their Indonesian and Malaysian counterparts.

However, Ms. Leong stated that the country should keep close watch of this situation because there is a large number of OFWs in the Middle East and students in Islamic schools. There is no organizational link between ISIS and ASG, BIFF, or any other Philippine jihadi group, but Ms. Leong described these groups as vulnerable targets for ISIS recruitment because of their relationship with Al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah, and their propensity to violent activities. The difference between local jihadists and jihadists in the Middle East, as explained by Ms. Leong, is financial competence—the local jihadists cannot easily afford to finance their ticket to Iraq or Syria, and are therefore unable to join ISIS on short notice. She also brought to light the concern of many countries about their citizens who go to Iraq or Syria and who, after fighting, are going to preach jihad upon returning home. There is no such threat in the Philippines at this time. However, some major looming concerns are: a) the potential further radicalization and recruitment of others of jihadists in Philippine prisons upon their release; b) the return of Singaporean, Malaysian, and Indonesian ISIS members to Southeast Asia to form a regional caliphate or a branch of ISIS, similar to what is happening in North Africa; and c) Filipino jihadist groups might be interested in joining this regional caliphate.

According to Ms. Leong, the Philippine government and its Indonesian and Malaysian counterparts have been taking action; all have been active in attempting to counter militancy and radicalism. The Philippine government, in particular, has enhanced intelligence monitoring on the different jihadi groups or personalities in the country and has enlisted the cooperation of Muslim communities, in compliance with UN Security Council's Resolution 2178 (Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts), by countering extremist narratives. Intelligence exchanges on terrorist issues with allied intelligence services are enhanced. Recent successes in the country against terrorism, which include the neutralization of Marwan and his local cohorts, have had significant impact in the country. These also serve as a message to international terrorists. Finally, Ms. Leong noted that with appropriate legal measures, through effective legislation, and with vigilance and sustained efforts, problems can be limited and contained.

Reaction

by B/GEN CARLITO GALVEZ, JR.

Chair, GPH Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH)

Gen. Carlito Galvez first stated that his reaction delves into two areas: the threat of ISIS, and its correlation with the local peace process. We should not take the threat of ISIS

lightly as he believes that it is similar to the threat of jihad during the Afghan War—there is a striking similarity in the waging of the Afghan War and the emergence of the JI in 1991. He believed that the influence of the rise of terrorism in the country came from the Muslim nationalist view of self-dependence, and that the threat of ISIS is very serious. He then enumerated terrorist incidents that might have been inspired by ISIS and related groups: the simultaneous bombing incidents in Cotabato and in Cagayan de Oro in 2013 (which is said to be inspired by the Khilafah Islamiyah Movement or KIM); beheading incidents in Basilan that might be inspired by ISIS; and the kidnapping of three children in Pitogo, Zamboanga del Sur last April. Some believe that the motivation is money, but Gen. Galvez thinks these incidents need to be closely looked into.

In the context of the peace process, during the all-out war in parts of Mindanao from 2000 to 2005, there was also a rise in the number of extremist attacks. These include the following: Feb. 14 bombing, MRT attack, and hundreds of other incidences that transpired. However, Gen. Galvez noted that there was a decrease of incidences of violence and terrorist attacks from 2009 to 2015 (until the Mamasapano incident) upon former General Victor Ibrado's signing of the document that he [Galvez] had drafted.

Gen. Galvez proceeded to discuss the role of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) and its impact upon its inclusion in the ceasefire mechanism, along with the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH) and Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG). The IMT consists of representatives from Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Japan, and other countries. Gen. Galvez said a significant decline in violence in Mindanao is noted and can be attributed to the degree of influence of the IMT. Gen. Galvez claimed that the IMT has a great impact on the peace process, and with its monitoring, law enforcement measures against terrorists and other lawless elements will gain ground. He also shared that IMT had a hand in the killing of Basit Usman. He conveyed the participation of the MILF in this operation, along with the group's commitment to getting other terrorists and eradicating lawlessness in the area.

According to Gen. Galvez, the correlation between the peace process and terrorism is very direct. If the peace process succeeds, it will limit the space that terrorists can operate in, and will gain us more than 30,000 people who will directly give information to eliminate the threat of terrorism. Finally, he concurred with Prof. Bilveer Singh in saying that there is a need to attain this peace and eliminate the challenge of ISIS in our midst.

SESSION TWO

Radicalization, Rehabilitation and Social Integration: Lessons for Mindanao

Introduction

by HON. MEHOL K. SADAIN

Commissioner, National Commission of Muslim Filipinos

Atty. Sadain introduced the three speakers for the second session of the conference, who are experts in radicalization, counter-terrorism, human security, conflict resolution, and rehabilitation: Kumar Ramakrishna, Alistair D.B. Cook, and Muhammad Saiful Alam Shah Bin Sudiman. He noted that the presentation by Mr. Shah on reintegration is significant as the country also has a similar process. He also introduced the reactors: Moner Bajunaid, Edicio dela Torre, and Maria Ressa, who are from the academe, NGO, and mass media, respectively.

Radicalization into Violent Extremism: Understanding the Processes

by KUMAR RAMAKRISHNA

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

In *Radicalization into Violent Extremism: Understanding the Processes*, Dr. Kumar Ramakrishna focused on the ideological and cognitive aspects of radicalization.

The former concerns “Al-Qaedaism” as a system of ideas (an “ideological narrative”), wherein a hostile us-versus-them dynamic is established: it is the Muslim World versus the West. Violence from radical Islamists is justified by this narrative of war against the West; even their civilians, Dr. Ramakrishna claimed, are not seen as innocent. The influence of this narrative can be seen in the emergence of violent attacks that are not explicitly ordered by Al-Qaeda (or ISIS) itself (i.e., “lone wolf attacks”).

The second part of Dr. Ramakrishna's presentation focused on the cognitive aspect of radicalization. This involves a particular way of thinking established through a particular process. In particular, a simplistic, mono-causal view of the world is accompanied by an emotional tendency on the part of the “radicals-to-be” in defense of this view. They see themselves as having the singular Truth, Dr. Ramakrishna claimed. The development of these tendencies are said to be usually triggered by a crisis and marginalization from the

future radical's community, and a subsequent potential solution found in a “spiritual sanctioner.” These beliefs are then reinforced by the small group of like-minded individuals of which a “radical-to-be” becomes a part. This process usually happens, Dr. Ramakrishna claimed, “outside of the mainstream,” that is, within relatively isolated collectives.

Citing Borum's four-stage model of a “terrorist mindset,” Dr. Ramakrishna established a progression, starting from people thinking that “it's not fair” to feeling that they have found answers on who should be blamed. This culminates in judging these supposed perpetrators as evil. However, it was noted that such a development (i.e., radicalization as such) does not necessarily translate to real-world violence. He used the term “non-violent extremist” to refer to someone who sees that the present is not yet the time to use such means, in comparison to a “not-violent” individual. Potential confusion can be clarified by saying that a non-violent extremist is one who does not see violence as a justified means, while one who is not-violent sees such acts as justified but that they should be reserved for a future time.

Citing Ross and Grossman, the aforementioned simplistic quality to extremist cognition can be seen in how extremists only trust one set of scholars, see an *inherent* schism between Islam and the West, and tend to impose their religious interpretation (“a highly politicized, often violent strain of Islam”) to others. Furthermore, it was claimed that the extremist always feels that she or he is the victim, which is accompanied by seeing their targets as less than human.

Towards the end of Dr. Ramakrishna's presentation, he established more (explicitly) normative claims: of the necessity of fighting extremism in all its forms, of combating extremism both in the material factors that potentially enable it and at the ideational level in which it operates, and of recommending de-radicalization and rehabilitation of former militants as part of the comprehensive peace strategy in Mindanao.

Conflict Resolution, Rehabilitation and Peacebuilding in ASEAN: Lessons for Mindanao?

by ALISTAIR D.B. COOK

Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Dr. Alistair D.B. Cook's presentation was about drawing on cases of peacebuilding for insights, questions, and lines of thought that can perhaps be useful to the dilemmas of Mindanao. Dr. Cook established early on that the peace problem is not to be belittled: 130,000 indigenous persons have been displaced as of March 2015. The problems are traced to a larger picture of mutually reinforcing and intersecting factors of poverty, violence, and injustice. Dr. Cook, having described Mindanao as having a poverty rate that is twice the national average, established a parallel with Myanmar in how the poorest parts of a nation-state are its most conflict-ridden.

He mentioned the shift in the peace negotiations in Myanmar: from bilateral and unintegrated talks and military-led negotiations to multilateral talks (including around 17 armed groups), and a multi-stakeholder approach in general. This also meant a greater engagement with civil society, for instance, in identifying which parties are affected by the conflict. Thus an important question about the role of civil society in peacebuilding negotiations arises: how can these “non-state governance and delivery regimes” be integrated into the process and facilitate a greater “civilian dynamic?”

On the other hand, a failure in these negotiations in the peace process would have particular adverse effects. This failure would mean a subsequent change in the key players and the emboldening of particular, then-alternative actors. It would result in the further displacement of civilians. Finally, it would prevent the entry of further investments.

Best Practices in Reintegration and Religious Rehabilitation

by MUHAMMAD SAIFUL ALAM SHAH BIN SUDIMAN

International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

In his presentation, Mr. Muhammad Saiful Alam Shah detailed country cases that illustrate how reintegration and rehabilitation of former militants can be done.

The subjects of reintegration and rehabilitation are those who, at one point, have “crossed a line”—they committed an act of violence, did his or her time in prison, and was then released. What is essential in reintegrating these subjects is establishing a conducive environment by clarifying what to expect from their side and from the side of the State, society, and their family. This is oriented towards creating a positive outlook and subsequent change.

Mr. Shah then described concrete cases of rehabilitation practice. In Singapore, for instance, there is intervention by the ex-militant’s family in the form of easing resentment on the part of the members, and financial, emotional, and social support in general. To keep the ex-militants away from radicalism, it is part of the reintegration process to make sure they have jobs. This is also the case for Belgium; it also ensures the concealment of the identity of the ex-militant for the sake of his family. In all of these, social workers and clerics play essential roles. In the United States and Belgium, the figure of the imam is also essential in bringing religious guidance.

When talking about religious rehabilitation, on the other hand, Mr. Shah declared that it is standard to engage the militant in the form of learning their (religious) ideology and to discover why they believed this ideology. The goal is, in the end, to disengage the militant from this radicalism and the violence that might accompany it. Concrete efforts in facilitating

this process include the establishment of the Religious Rehabilitation Group, and the writing of religious counseling guidebooks.

However, there are challenges in establishing these practices. For instance, in reintegration, there is the challenge of attempting to maintain the identity of the ex-militant secret and the challenge of the seeming incompatibility of the Church and the State in the West (especially the United States). When it comes to rehabilitation, on the other hand, challenges include the identification of religious authority and distinguishing *good* religious authority. There is also the emergence of new ideologies (i.e., Mr. Shah sees the difference between the guiding principles of ISIS and of Al Qaeda). The basic lack of an indigenous program in rehabilitation (for instance, in the Philippines) is another potential challenge to be addressed in the future.

Reaction

by PROF. MONER BAJUNAID

Secretary-General, National Ulama Conference in the Philippines

Prof. Moner Bajunaid began his reaction by stating that the passage of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) is a pre-emptive and non-violent solution to extremism. In response to Dr. Ramakrishna's discussion, he noted that extremism, not only in religion but in other fields as well, is the belief that "my belief is the only correct thing." He also recalled Dr. Cook's observation that peace negotiations in the region took place parallel to the promotion of economic development in conflict-ridden areas. He related this to the Bangsamoro Development Plan which included short-, medium- and long-term plans for basic services, infrastructure, economic development, and environmental protection in preparation for the establishment of a new autonomous government in the region should the BBL be passed.

He then discussed Mr. Shah's presentation on rehabilitation and related this to rehabilitation in the BBL. He noted that this focuses on combatants in its current form, when civilians are the primary victims of conflict. He also touched on the role of ulama and alimah as discussed in Mr. Shah's discussion on religious rehabilitation and noted that the PCID has been involved with a network of such Islamic scholars for the past seven years. The ulama and alimah both have spiritual functions which include the strengthening of Islamic education and values in Muslim communities, and societal functions which include advocacy for human and social rights. He also mentioned a certain survey that showed the ulama as the most trusted individuals among different communities and political leaders.

Prof. Bajunaid then moved to a discussion of peace in Islam, which holds life in all its forms sacred, and Islamic peace education which sees Allah as the God of peace, Muhammad as the messenger of peace, Islam as the religion of peace, and the Muslim as the

advocate of peace. He also noted that violence, the negative result when conflict is not peacefully resolved, does not only refer to conflicts using the physical force but also to times when we neglect our obligation to the poor and marginalized, or when we form certain prejudices.

Lastly, he highlighted the role of the PCID in assisting in the formation of the NUCP as well as the NUCP's development activities for Filipino Muslims.

Reaction

by MR. EDICIO DELA TORRE

Board Member, Balay Mindanaw

Mr. Edicio dela Torre first related the discussion on radicalization to the left-secular and Christian radical tradition in the Philippines, particularly during the martial law period. He mentioned Gramsci's theory that hegemony succeeds through a combination of coercion and consent.

He then narrated an experience of rehabilitation of communities affected by conflict following the signing of the GRP-MNLF peace agreement: he found that sharing his experience of imprisonment during the martial law period allowed him to better facilitate budget planning sessions in these communities. He proposed a reintegration program that must welcome radicalized individuals into a system that is desirable and different from the system they did not want to be part of to begin with.

Next, he narrated his time giving technical education to former radicals, and highlighted the strategy of engaging participants in physical activities (e.g., demolishing damaged buildings before beginning the rebuilding process) in order to process the energy left over from their armed struggle. He also recounted a psycho-social session wherein a former militant was asked whether peace was the right choice. While he does not regret the armed struggle, he was taught skills that allow him to be productive in a peaceful setting. Based on this anecdote, Mr. dela Torre concluded that possibilities for an honorable and productive life should be shown to former militants if they make a "leap" by giving up armed struggle which they considered to be an honorable way of life. He also noted that skills used during the armed struggle can be converted into skills for peace, and that the perception of former militants as unskilled workers should be countered.

Then he noted an experience where he was involved in the rehabilitation efforts in Mindanao under the Estrada administration. Residents of the war-torn areas were "okay" with Pres. Estrada because at least their houses were being rebuilt despite being against the all-out war. He related this to the fact that the intelligentsia understands social problems differently from how the people who actually experience them do.

Lastly, he pointed out that Christian theology has three distinct forms: professional theology for biblical studies, pastoral theology used for formal sermons and preaching, and popular theology which relates these to the language of the people. He concluded that Muslim scholars and clerics would need to use the Islamic equivalents of all three of these theologies to engage both radicalized militants and communities affected by conflict.

Reaction

by MS. MARIA RESSA

President and CEO, Rappler

Ms. Maria Ressa gave a presentation on the use of social media by radical organizations for recruitment. She stated that there is a fear among analysts that the failure to pass the BBL will create a vulnerability in the region. She also noted that these radical movements are not about regions but rather about power. Thus, targets for recruitment for extremist groups are not limited to Muslim youth but to any youth who is dissatisfied or who perceives injustice.

She then discussed how social media eliminates the physical boundaries of social networks, allowing ideas, including radical ideology, to spread across physical borders. She narrated the story of a Filipino who was recruited by Al Qaeda through Facebook in 2011 and noted that ISIS, which publishes 200,000 pieces of social media every day, is savvier with this technology.

She also presented the conversion funnel of how recruitment is done, beginning with open searchable social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram before moving to sites like Ask.fm, followed by sites that allow encrypted direct messaging like Skype or Kik, and ending with physical recruitment. She also noted that social media, which has been found to be mildly addictive as it raises users' dopamine levels, is the "great disruptor in many industries," including terrorism, and cited how Rappler started by basically reverse engineering the social media strategies of terrorist organizations.

She concluded with the point that a tweet or any other piece of social media can spread emotions, such as fear, through networks that are no longer bound by physical borders. For radicalization, she noted that individuals who are more radicalized through such networks show less engagement with their other networks, such as family and friends.

In the specific case of the Philippines, she also noted that the debate on whether or not groups affiliated with ISIS were directly recruited by them does not matter, because affiliating with ISIS in itself already makes these groups more radical.

However, she ended by stating that the Philippine situation is not as bad as it is in other areas in the region since the conflict here is poverty-driven, which allows peace and development to be used to address the problem.

Annexes

Slides and Photos

To view the slides of the conference speakers and photos from the conference, please go to:

pcid.org/radicalization-in-east-asia-addressing-the-challenges-of-the-expanding-isis-influence

You may also view the photo gallery at PCID's Facebook page:

bit.ly/radconphotos

Profiles of Organizations



Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID), a non-partisan, non-profit organization established as a Council in 2002, is dedicated to the study of Islamic and democratic political thought and the search for peace, democracy and development in Muslim communities. Its incorporation as a Center in June 2010 signifies its vision to become the premier think tank on Muslim Mindanao issues in the country. Today, PCID is increasingly seen as an objective party with a track record of bringing together all sectors in the democratic dialogue for peace and development. The forging of strong links between and among the stakeholders has been one of the successes of PCID. All of its activities have been marked by strong representation of the key parties: civil society groups local and international, government, the ulama and aleemat, women, the military, the international community, academe, media, the business community, and political leaders.



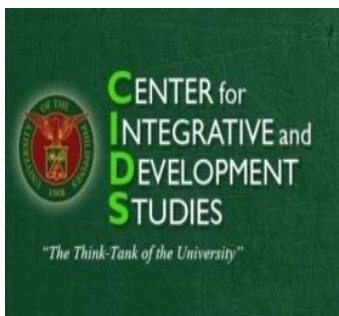
The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** was established in January 2007 as an autonomous school within the Nanyang Technological University. Known earlier as the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies when it was established in July 1996, RSIS' mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia

Pacific. The mission of RSIS are the following: (1) Provide a rigorous professional graduate education with a strong practical emphasis; (2) Conduct policy-relevant research in defence, national security, international relations, strategic studies and diplomacy; and (3) Foster a global network of like-minded professional schools. RSIS offers a challenging graduate education in international affairs, taught by an international faculty of leading thinkers and practitioners. Research at RSIS focuses on issues relating to the security and stability of the Asia Pacific region and their implications for Singapore and other countries in the region.



The **University of the Philippines College of Law** is an institution acknowledged for its continuing commitment to academic excellence and service to the public. This recognition is the product of an ongoing effort to transform itself so that it can be a catalyst for change in our legal institutions. The transformation of the College has been from a professional school to a law complex with a triad of functions: 1) instruction, 2) research, and 3) extension service. The

change has its bases in that the College is an institution maintained by the people, and it must serve the people by being responsive to the growing legal and other law-related needs of all Filipinos. **The UP Law Center**, in turn, is composed of five Institutes created in 1989, namely: Institute of Government and Law Reform (IGLR), Institute of Human Rights (IHR), Institute of International Legal Studies (IILS), Institute for the Administration of Justice (IAJ) and Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea (IMLOS).



The **University of the Philippines-Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP-CIDS)** spans various perspectives, methodologies, and ideologies in its conduct of basic and policy-oriented research. The Center harnesses the University's multidisciplinary expertise in its studies on critical fields. In its early years, the UP-CIDS was under the Office of the UP President. This was to facilitate its evolution into a system-wide intellectual arm of the university as well as enhance its chances of obtaining funds. In

2001, the direct responsibility for the center was devolved to the Office of Vice President for Academic Affairs in order to enhance the links of the center with other academic units and programs. Since the 1990s, UP-CIDS has been convening programs on a wide array of issues, ranging from European studies to Asia-Pacific and Philippine concerns. It has also

been in the forefront of endeavors in the 1990s and 2000s toward understanding the dynamics of peacebuilding, especially in Mindanao. Beginning in 2014, UP-CIDS has been organizing research programs, round table discussions and forums on ASEAN integration, national marine policy review, migration, environmental governance, sustainable energy, and China Studies, among others.



Mindanao State University (MSU) was established on September 1, 1961 through RA 1387, as amended, was the brain child of the late Senator Domocao A. Alonto, as one of the government's responses to the so-called "Mindanao Problem". The original mission of the university was anchored on instruction, research and extension. The 1954 Congressional Committee conceptualized it as a social laboratory for national integration. In 1962, MSU started with the main campus in Marawi serving 282 students. It has grown to a multi-campus supra-regional university system, serving over 69,000 students in 11 campuses in Mindanao with over 3,000 faculty members.