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## JEMAAH ISLAMIYAH

by David Gordon and Samuel Lindo

## Executive Summary

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) was created by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, two Indonesian extremists who fled to Malaysia in 1985. In exile, the two men began dispatching fighters to join the growing ranks of international Muslim volunteers seeking to repel the Red Army from Afghanistan. It was during this period that Sungkar and Ba'asyir's network established close ties with individuals who would later become associated with al Qaeda core and affiliated groups. Sungkar and Ba'asyir formalized their group as JI in the early 1990s and relocated to Indonesia in 1998 following the collapse of President Suharto after more than 30 years in power.

Although JI participated in local sectarian conflicts, a faction within the group had a more ambitious agenda and embraced Osama bin Laden's global focus. Encouraged and enabled by al Qaeda core, this faction bombed Western tourist sites on the island of Bali in October 2002. Beginning in 2003, the faction began to split off from the original organization and form violent splinter

*(Executive Summary continued next page)*

The Al Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM) Futures Project is a joint study undertaken by the CSIS Transnational Threats Project and the CSIS Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Program. The initiative will produce a series of alternative futures regarding the state of AQAM in the year 2025 and generate recommendations to defeat the threat over the long term. Drawing on historical analysis, social science research, expert interviews, and targeted fieldwork, this project will provide to policymakers and strategists a vision beyond the next few years and will consider the trends and shocks that may shape AQAM over the next decade and a half.

This case study is one of several examining the historic evolution and future prospects of al Qaeda and its range of affiliated groups. The purpose of the case studies is to determine the key drivers that have influenced a terrorist group's trajectory over time. Ultimately, these drivers, in conjunction with additional supporting analysis, will be used to inform projections about the future of al Qaeda and its affiliates.

cells.<sup>1</sup> JI's leadership had alienated these hard-line splinters by signaling their intent to reject violence—if only temporarily—in favor of religious outreach to build public support. As the splinters went on to perpetrate subsequent bombings, including three more in Bali in October 2005, they hardened Indonesian opposition to JI and catalyzed an aggressive campaign against the group. By 2011, the most high-profile of these splinters had been dismantled. At the time of this publication, the group's formal leadership maintains its emphasis on religious outreach.

## Key Judgments

### Emergence and Evolution of JI: 1985–October 2002

- *Networking.* The war and subsequent safe haven in Afghanistan provided JI the opportunity to establish partnerships with al Qaeda core and Southeast Asian militant groups, who provided critical training, resources, and guidance.
- *Political transition.* The 1998 political transition in Indonesia attenuated government pressure on Islamists, creating a more permissive environment for JI. This transition also led to local sectarian conflicts that became an important cause célèbre and combat venue for the organization.
- *Terrorist patron.* Al Qaeda core acted as a terrorist patron that encouraged and enabled JI members to strike Western targets independently of the group's central leadership.

### Realignment and Fragmentation of JI: October 2002–Present

- *Leadership.* Fundamental disagreements among senior JI leaders catalyzed the group's realignment and fragmentation. Violent hard-liners formed new and active splinter groups, while the group's remaining leadership temporarily shifted away from violence and emphasized religious outreach.

### Rise and Decline of JI Splinters: 2004–Present

- *Leadership.* The charismatic leadership and operational experience of Non-structural JI operatives provided

coherence and direction to radicalized militants who were eager for action but lacked an adequate platform.

- *Local support.* Although JI never enjoyed widespread support in Indonesia, Indonesians tolerated the organization until one of its splinters detonated bombs on the island of Bali in 2005. That attack galvanized public opposition to the group, thus empowering Indonesian leaders to aggressively dismantle JI's infrastructure.
- *Counterterrorism pressure.* Global counterterrorism operations severed JI's links with al Qaeda core and deepened the split between its factions. By the time of the 2005 Bali attacks, domestic opposition to terrorism had grown as well, and local governments now had the political backing to exert counterterrorism pressure, thus further weakening the group.

## Full Narrative

### The Emergence and Evolution of JI

#### The Sungkar and Ba'asyir Network

Jemaah Islamiyah grew out of Darul Islam (DI), a West Javanese insurgent movement that sought to impose Islamic law as Indonesia transitioned from Dutch rule. In the mid-1950s, DI movements in Aceh and South Sulawesi also arose, but the national army put down all three rebellions.<sup>2</sup> DI rebounded in the 1970s after receiving support from the Indonesian government, which hoped that the organization would be a partner against the Indonesian Communist Party.<sup>3</sup> This union would not last long, and soon DI was once again an enemy of the state.<sup>4</sup>

On November 10, 1978, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir and Abdullah Sungkar, both Indonesian citizens of Yemeni descent, were arrested for their ties to DI. In 1982 they received nine-year prison sentences, but were released on appeal. Three years later the Indonesian Supreme Court reversed that decision, and Ba'asyir and Sungkar fled to Malaysia.<sup>5</sup> In exile, they expanded their network and began sending men to wage guerrilla war against the Soviet army in Afghanistan.

The Afghan conflict transformed Ba'asyir and Sungkar's network. Those who traveled to the training camps of Pakistan and the battlefields of Afghanistan gained important military skills, including instruction on explo-

sives, mines, maps, and infantry tactics.<sup>6</sup> The men were also exposed to new ideologies through their contact with Abdullah Azzam, the man most responsible for catalyzing the foreign fighter migration to Afghanistan, and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, a fundamentalist Afghan insurgent leader. Most importantly, they built lasting relationships with Osama bin Laden and other “Afghan Arabs” who would form the backbone of al Qaeda and associated movements (AQAM).<sup>7</sup>

The Afghan experience also created linkages among Southeast Asian militants. Indonesian cadres trained alongside Thais, Malaysians, and Filipinos in a camp run by Sayyaf. In addition to the fighters sent by Ba’asyir and Sungkar, this Southeast Asian contingent included men from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abdurajak Janjalani, a Moro insurgent who would later establish the Abu Sayyaf Group—an al Qaeda-linked terrorist group named after Janjalani’s Afghan host.<sup>8</sup>

### JI Takes Shape

Around 1992, a disagreement developed between Sungkar and a DI leader named Ajengan Masduki after the former charged the latter with “having Shi’ite and Sufi tendencies and therefore straying from Salafi teaching.”<sup>9</sup> Sungkar had preached about the need to create a new organization since the 1970s, and his argument with Masduki led him to split from DI and pursue this objective.<sup>10</sup> Sungkar’s new group was JI. The men that Sungkar and Ba’asyir had dispatched to Afghanistan formed the backbone of this organization.

As JI took shape, a hierarchical structure emerged that had operational or administrative units known as Mantiqis in Singapore and Malaysia (Mantiqi I); Indonesia (Mantiqi II); Mindanao, Sabah, and Sulawesi (Mantiqi III); and Papua and Australia (Mantiqi IV).<sup>11</sup> In addition, the organization had a special operations unit that was not tied to a specific location. According to JI’s charter, known by its Indonesian acronym PUPJI, the group sought to create an Islamic state in Indonesia.<sup>12</sup> Once that goal had been achieved, the group hoped the boundaries of that state would expand to include Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and Mindanao.<sup>13</sup>

Despite this Southeast Asian focus, JI maintained a presence in South Asia to continue training fighters. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, JI’s training facilities were relocated from Pakistan to a

camp near Khost, Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup> Around 1993, Sayyaf set up a JI camp in Torkham that also trained MILF members.<sup>15</sup> JI continued to send trainees to Afghanistan as late as 2000, when Riduan Isamuddin, better known as Hambali, arranged training for several men.<sup>16</sup> Between 2000 and 2003, JI had a cell in Karachi, Pakistan, that allegedly received training from Lashkar-e-Taiba.<sup>17</sup>

JI also established infrastructure closer to home. In the mid-1990s, Sungkar decided to set up training camps in Mindanao that were cheaper and easier to access than those in Afghanistan.<sup>18</sup> With areas of Mindanao under MILF control and poorly policed sea-lanes connecting it to Indonesia, the island seemed like a natural safe haven for Sungkar’s fighters. JI constructed a facility within the MILF’s Camp Abu Bakar complex and began training and indoctrinating a new cadre of fighters. Years later, the growing relationship between JI and Moro insurgents would prove to be an important source of resilience for Sungkar’s organization and its offshoots.

### JI’s Campaign of Terror in Indonesia

When President Suharto resigned in May 1998 after more than 30 years in power, Ba’asyir and Sungkar returned to Indonesia, having decided that the moment for creating a Southeast Asian caliphate was at hand.<sup>19</sup> A month later, Sungkar died of natural causes, leaving the organization in the hands of Ba’asyir, whom many saw as a weak leader.<sup>20</sup> A few months after his return to Indonesia, Ba’asyir became the head of the governing council of the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), an aboveground group seeking the implementation of Islamic law in Indonesia.

With Ba’asyir in charge, significant fissures soon emerged within JI. Mantiqi II leaders questioned whether the moment was right for violent action in Indonesia, and instead wanted to concentrate on building the resources necessary to establish an Islamic state over the long term, setting a target date of 2025.<sup>21</sup> Mantiqi I leaders, on the other hand, had a different focus altogether and pointed to bin Laden’s 1996 and 1998 fatwas authorizing strikes against the United States and its allies.<sup>22</sup> Another spat emerged over Ba’asyir’s affiliation with MMI, which some JI members saw as a conflict of interest.

The outbreak of sectarian violence in Maluku in January 1999 exacerbated these internal divides. Members of Mantiqis II and III were cautious about getting involved.

Members of Mantiqi I, however, were angry that Muslims were being killed and wanted action.<sup>23</sup>

Some JI fighters eventually participated in the conflict, joining a loose coalition known as Laskar Mujahedeen that also included DI factions and members of other groups.<sup>24</sup> JI members operating within Laskar Mujahedeen also took part in another sectarian conflict in Poso a few months later. These conflicts acted as “mini-Afghanistans” that helped network and train a new generation of JI members.<sup>25</sup>

On Christmas Eve of 2000, JI executed coordinated bombings against 38 churches and priests in Jakarta, Sumatra, and Java.<sup>26</sup> Although not all of the explosives detonated, 19 people were killed and 120 more were wounded. These attacks signaled JI’s growing capacity as a terrorist organization, but indicated an ongoing focus on local targets.

By 2001, a group of JI members who supported bin Laden’s fatwas made a decision to pursue mass-casualty terrorism as advocated by al Qaeda core. After a plot to strike British, U.S., Israeli, Australian, and Singaporean targets in Singapore was disrupted in December 2001, JI targeted Westerners in Indonesia.<sup>27</sup> On October 12, 2002, JI members detonated bombs at the Sari club and Paddy’s Bar on the Indonesian island of Bali, killing 202 people, many of whom were Western tourists.

## Realignment and Fragmentation of JI

After the 2002 Bali bombings, JI’s leadership came to see mass-casualty terrorism within Indonesia as futile for the time being. Soon, the group distanced itself from al Qaeda core’s call for attacks against Western targets. Although JI remained committed to establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia and the broader region in the long term—violently, if necessary—it came to realize that the current environment was not conducive to armed confrontation. Instead of terrorism, JI began to focus on education and *dawa* (religious outreach).

The realignment away from the global Islamist terrorist movement alienated hard-line members of the organization, leading to the group’s gradual fragmentation. Those who left the group became “free agents” who pursued their own agendas independently. These splinters are sometimes referred to collectively as “Non-structural JI.” In turn,

“Structural JI” represents the remnants of the formal organization that grew out of Sungkar and Ba’asyir’s network. It is best understood as a constellation of Indonesia-based schools, publishing houses, and other businesses held together by the JI social network, which itself retains a degree of hierarchy thanks to a succession of relatively weak emirs.

Originally, Structural JI’s leadership tolerated Non-structural JI. Their official line was that Structural JI members could shelter Non-structural JI operatives but should not participate in the latter’s operations.<sup>28</sup> By July 2004, Structural JI’s position had changed, and its leaders issued guidance to members allowing them to alert the Indonesian authorities as to the whereabouts of specific Non-structural JI figures.<sup>29</sup> This decision is indicative of the split between Structural and Non-structural JI.

## Rise and Decline of JI Splinters

Some seasoned analysts question the delineation between Structural and Non-structural JI.<sup>30</sup> Such criticism is not without merit given that each emerged from the original network. Moreover, Non-structural JI members were products of JI-linked schools, consumers of JI publications, and frequently drew on their relationships with other JI members. Nevertheless, the fact is that some members of JI acted independently from and at odds with the formal organization, forming at least three important clusters that merit a more detailed and separate analysis.

### Noordin Top’s Network

The most high-profile Non-structural JI network was centered around Noordin Mohammad Top, a Malaysian JI member who was tied to the 2002 Bali bombings.<sup>31</sup> Top’s group, known as al Qaeda for the Malay Archipelago, continued to perpetrate Bali-type operations against the “far enemy” long after Structural JI’s realignment. The group was linked to the 2003 bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta, the 2004 attack on the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, another Bali attack in 2005 that proved crucial to turning public sentiment against the group, and a pair of suicide bombings against Western hotels in Jakarta in July 2009.<sup>32</sup> Top was killed in September 2009 after a shoot-out with police in Central Java.<sup>33</sup> His close followers have not carried out a successful attack since his death.



## Umar Patek's Network

Another Non-structural JI network was led by a militant named Umar Patek and included a man named Dulmatin. Both Patek and Dulmatin were JI members who had received training in al Qaeda core camps in Afghanistan during the mid-1990s.<sup>34</sup> Wanted in Indonesia for their role in the 2002 Bali attacks, they fled to the southern Philippines in mid-2003.<sup>35</sup> There, Patek and Dulmatin trained members of the Abu Sayyaf Group in the manufacture and use of improvised explosive devices.<sup>36</sup> Despite the leaders' exile in the southern Philippines, the cell maintained communication with militants in Indonesia. Between 2003 and 2005, Patek used contacts in Central Java to recruit fighters and raise funds in support of his efforts in the southern Philippines.<sup>37</sup>

According to Indonesian and Philippine security officials, Patek left the southern Philippines in May 2010 and headed to the Middle East before arriving in Pakistan.<sup>38</sup> Other sources, however, indicate that he departed earlier and spent one year living in a Jakarta suburb before departing to Pakistan intent on fighting in Afghanistan.<sup>39</sup> On January 25, 2011, he was arrested in Abbottabad, Pakistan, the same town where Osama bin Laden would be killed only four months later.<sup>40</sup> Patek's arrest in Abbottabad came as a surprise to many and raised questions about the current relationship between al Qaeda core and Non-structural JI. The intelligence gathered at bin Laden's compound and obtained from Patek's subsequent interrogations may shed light on this nexus.<sup>41</sup>

## Dulmatin's "Lintas Tanzim"

In late 2007, Dulmatin returned to Indonesia and began a third cluster of Non-structural JI in Aceh. Dulmatin's so-called Lintas Tanzim, or cross-organization project, included men associated with JI, the Islamist group KOMPAK, and the Banten Ring as well as a group of new recruits from Aceh and a network centered around a man named Aman Abdurrahman.<sup>42</sup> This coalition saw Structural JI as too passive and dismissed Top's approach as excessive and ultimately futile. Instead, it sought a violent but disciplined campaign focused on carving out a secure base for implementing Islamic law and attacking whatever obstacles emerged in the process. The camp went undetected for nearly a year until a tip from a local villager alerted local policemen to Lintas Tanzim's presence. A subsequent

series of police raids between February and March 2010 captured or killed nearly 100 militants, including Dulmatin, and disrupted Lintas Tanzim.<sup>43</sup>

Notably, in August 2010, Indonesian authorities arrested Abu Bakar Ba'asyir for his alleged links to the Aceh camp.<sup>44</sup> Given that Ba'asyir was reported to have renounced violence and remained in Structural JI, this development was significant to observers who question the Structural/Non-Structural divide. According to the testimony of Ubeid, a former associate of Top, Ba'asyir had met with Dulmatin face-to-face to discuss the Aceh project.<sup>45</sup> On June 16, 2011, Ba'asyir was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his activities related to the Aceh camp.<sup>46</sup>

## Determinants of Decline

Noordin Top's 2005 Bali attacks and their aftermath had a dramatic impact on JI. Prior to the bombings, the Indonesian government had not aggressively pursued the group, although other states had pressured it.<sup>47</sup> The United States officially listed JI as a foreign terrorist organization on October 23, 2002, less than three weeks after the first Bali attacks and nearly a year after the group's Singapore plot had been interdicted. Indonesians were skeptical about counterterrorism operations, however. Many saw the Western "War on Terror" as a campaign against Islam. In addition, a September 2000 bombing of the Jakarta Stock Exchange that was initially blamed on radicals had turned out to be perpetrated by elite members of Indonesian Special Forces.<sup>48</sup> This contributed to broad distrust of the public narrative that bombings such as the 2002 Bali explosions were perpetrated by Islamic radicals.

Accordingly, there remained a dearth of public enthusiasm to go after JI. Moderates ignored radical Islamists, and secular politicians refused to challenge them for fear of being dubbed anti-Islamic—a problematic accusation for those seeking office given that more than 80 percent of Indonesian voters are Muslim.<sup>49</sup> In time, however, this sentiment changed. A survey conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project found that the proportion of Indonesians who felt suicide bombing was often or sometimes justified fell from 26 percent in 2002 to 15 percent in 2005 and just 10 percent in 2006.<sup>50</sup> In late 2004, a four-star general named Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, famous for his role in the fight against terrorism, was elected president of Indonesia.<sup>51</sup>

The 2005 Bali bombings and subsequent acts of violence shocked Indonesians and hardened their opinions against JI and its tactics. This shift meant that other Indonesian politicians could also pursue JI without fear of alienating their constituents. Jakarta began arresting JI members and cooperating more closely with foreign partners to dismantle the organization, without fear of provoking a negative response from Indonesians. With the assistance of Australia and the United States, Indonesia developed a robust counterterrorism capability that produced major setbacks for JI and, in conjunction with regional partners, virtually dismantled the Mantiqi structure.

## Analysis

### Period I: Emergence and Evolution of JI

- *Networking.* Although many factors contributed to the gradual evolution of Sungkar and Ba'asyir's network, three in particular were most important. The first was the networking opportunity provided by the convergence of militants in South Asia. Beginning in the mid-1980s, men associated with Sungkar and Ba'asyir traveled to Afghanistan and Pakistan, first to fight as volunteers against the Soviet occupation and, following the Red Army's withdrawal in 1989, to receive terrorist training.

The Afghan experience created links between Sungkar and Ba'asyir's network and those who were or would become members of al Qaeda core, the MILF, and the Abu Sayyaf Group, among others. As discussed below, coordinating and training with al Qaeda core operatives would transform Sungkar and Ba'asyir's network into an important node in the AQAM movement. The ties that these men developed with militants from the southern Philippines were also critical, providing JI with a secure haven long after increased counterterrorism pressure made traveling to Afghanistan and Pakistan a dangerous proposition.

The combat skills and training that Sungkar and Ba'asyir's network received in Afghanistan—and the camaraderie and credentials associated with such experiences—would also prove important for JI. According to the International Crisis Group, all of JI's top leaders and many of its most important operatives received training in Afghanistan.<sup>52</sup> That said, JI members accrued the same benefits in

Ambon, Poso, and the southern Philippines. What truly set Afghanistan apart were the indispensable partnerships that Sungkar and Ba'asyir's men established there.

- *Political transition.* The second key factor that shaped the evolution of the Sungkar-Ba'asyir network was the political transition in Indonesia that occurred when President Suharto resigned in 1998 after more than three decades in power. This development affected JI in two critical ways. First and foremost, it created a more permissive environment for JI. Suharto's grip on power had been absolute, and he effectively suppressed any expressions of politicized Islam that operated outside of the United Development Party (PPP), a political entity over which he had significant control.<sup>53</sup> Suharto's departure resulted in a new democratic system that created the political space for radical Islamists.<sup>54</sup> This opening prompted Sungkar and Ba'asyir, whose network was by then formalized as JI, to return from Malaysia and begin their project in earnest.

The second reason that the demise of the Suharto regime proved critical for JI was because it led to the outbreak of sectarian conflicts in Ambon and Poso. These conflicts became an important cause célèbre for JI, and they provided a domestic combat venue that the organization infiltrated immediately following its return to Indonesia. In addition to boosting JI's profile locally, these clashes helped mobilize, radicalize, network, and train a new generation of JI cadres.

- *Terrorist Patron.* The third and final key factor related to JI's rise was the group's relationship with al Qaeda core, which acted as a terrorist patron. Al Qaeda core's influence had a profound impact on JI by encouraging and enabling members of the group to strike Western targets.

Following Sungkar and Ba'asyir's return to Indonesia, JI's leadership became embroiled in several disagreements. One argument related to the group's future direction. Mantiqi II leaders wanted to consolidate the group's strength while Mantiqi I leaders wanted to act on bin Laden's 1996 and 1998 fatwas authorizing strikes against the United States and its allies.

The 2001 Singapore plot and the 2002 Bali attacks would seem to suggest that the Mantiqi I leadership prevailed over Mantiqi II, steering the group in support of bin Laden's global agenda. In reality, the Bali attacks did

not represent a shift in JI's focus. Ali Imron, one of the key participants in the operation, and Achmad Roihan, a member of JI's executive council, both argued that the operation was undertaken not by JI as an organization, but by specific members on a unilateral basis.<sup>55</sup>

Several of the JI men linked to the Bali attacks, such as Hambali, Ali Gufon, Imam Sumudra, Mukhlas, and Ali Imron, had spent time in Afghanistan, where they developed relationships with al Qaeda core operatives. The key coordinator of the al Qaeda core–JI relationship was Hambali, who, according to the U.S. Department of Defense, had longstanding ties with Khaled Sheikh Muhammad.<sup>56</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report confirms this and also highlights Hambali's relationship with Mohammed Atef, who, along with Khaled Sheikh Muhammad, sought to expand JI's ambitions.<sup>57</sup>

Through these ties, al Qaeda core actively encouraged JI members to pursue mass-casualty attacks on Western targets, first in Singapore and then in Indonesia.<sup>58</sup> Hambali's embrace of al Qaeda core's global struggle is illustrative of this influence. According to the 9/11 Commission Report, Hambali "did not originally orient JI's operations toward attacking the United States, but his involvement with al Qaeda [core] appears to have inspired him to pursue American targets."<sup>59</sup> Khalid Sheikh Muhammad took credit for this shift during his interrogation by U.S. authorities.<sup>60</sup>

In addition to encouraging JI members to strike the West, al Qaeda core actually subsidized operations against Western targets. Al Qaeda core sent \$30,000 to the cell that carried out the first Bali attacks and also helped underwrite the 2003 Marriott hotel bombing. In addition, al Qaeda-linked individuals in Pakistan provided \$50,000 to Hambali, a portion of which went toward the Australian Embassy bombing.<sup>61</sup> Al Qaeda core's financial contribution ensured that these operations could take place without the acquiescence—and resources—of JI's leadership.

Despite the key role al Qaeda core played in JI's evolution, one should be cautious about overstating the influence of bin Laden's organization. Some aspects of al Qaeda core's ideology were consonant with that of JI and its precursor, DI. Although these three organizations advocated different approaches, they all supported the use of violence toward the goal of establishing an Islamic caliphate.<sup>62</sup> This

is important, as it shows that al Qaeda core's influence resulted in a reorientation of Indonesian militancy rather than an escalation from non-violent to violent activism.

## Period II: Realignment and Fragmentation of JI

- *Leadership.* Disagreements among JI's top ranks proved to be the driving force behind the group's realignment and fragmentation. Many JI members felt that the costs associated with terrorist violence outweighed the benefits, at least for the time being. This viewpoint prevailed, and the organization decided to reorient its energy and funding into religious outreach until conditions changed. JI's decision to focus on *dawa* alienated its hard-line members, who advocated a more aggressive approach. Noordin Top wanted to continue bombings, and Patek and Dulmatin had their own plans in the southern Philippines. Eventually, these divergent opinions led to JI's fragmentation into Structural and Non-Structural elements. This split unfolded over time but came into sharper focus by July 2004, at which point Structural JI's leadership authorized its subordinates to betray the whereabouts of certain Non-structural JI operatives to government authorities.

## Period III: Rise and Decline of JI Splinters

- *Leadership.* The key factor underpinning the three primary Non-structural JI networks is leadership. Top, Patek, and Dulmatin were charismatic leaders who were able to personally cultivate networks that transcended organizational boundaries. As skilled militants, they were able to operate effectively in increasingly inhospitable environments, in some cases transnationally. Their charisma, connections, and operational experience provided coherence and direction to radicalized militants who were eager for action but lacked an organizational platform.

Without the key role played by Top, Patek, and Dulmatin, it seems unlikely that a small handful of disgruntled JI members and like-minded individuals would have managed to carry out significant operations or develop infrastructure. Instead, the three Non-structural JI networks operated with surprising effectiveness. Top's network carried out several high-profile attacks in Indonesia while Patek's group fueled instability in the southern Philippines. Although Dulmatin's *Lintas Tanzim* was nipped in the bud, his ability to leave the southern Philippines and clandestine-

tinely cobble together a coalition on Indonesian soil came as a shock to most analysts.

- *Local support.* Although JI never had broad-based support, many Indonesians were hesitant to address or, in some cases, acknowledge the threat of terrorism in their midst. Even after the first Bali attack, conspiratorial rumors circulated that the bombings were carried out by the United States or the Indonesian military. After the second round of Bali bombings in 2005, however, the public mentality shifted. As accumulating evidence demonstrated JI's clear culpability for the attack, Indonesians' tolerance for the group began disintegrating.
- *Counterterrorism pressure.* On the global, regional, and local levels, counterterrorism pressure was an important factor in the evolution of Non-structural JI. In the aftermath of 9/11, the United States and its partners began a global manhunt for al Qaeda core members and their associates, leading to the death or capture of key operatives who served as conduits between al Qaeda core and JI. These included Mohammad Atef, who was killed in a U.S. airstrike in Kabul in November 2001;<sup>63</sup> Khaled Sheikh Mohammad, who was arrested in Rawalpindi in March 2003;<sup>64</sup> and Hambali, who was captured in Thailand in August 2003.<sup>65</sup>

With these individuals removed from the battlefield, the JI–al Qaeda core relationship weakened significantly and JI hard-liners were forced to become self-sufficient. The elimination of Hambali in particular had an important role in disrupting the flow of money from al Qaeda core to the members of JI most committed to striking the West.<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, Top, Dulmatin, and Patek's ability to operate independently of support from al Qaeda proved crucial to the survivability of the group.

Finally, as Western counterterrorism pressure isolated JI's pro-al Qaeda faction, regional counterterrorism operations dismantled JI's organizational infrastructure. Following the 2005 Bali attacks, local governments too were able to mount significant pressure against JI. Finally in possession of the requisite political backing, authorities began confronting militants aggressively, killing or capturing dozens of JI members and their associates across Southeast Asia. Governments also engaged in "soft" approaches to rehabilitate prisoners and prevent radicalization or recidivism.<sup>67</sup> Underpinning this success was the professional-

ization of local security forces, regional cooperation, and Australian and U.S. assistance.

## The Future of Structural and Non-structural JI

Some manifestation of JI or its offshoots will probably exist in 2025. If present levels of Indonesian government pressure remain constant, Structural JI is best positioned for long-term survival. Although Structural JI has been severely degraded, critical portions of the group's infrastructure remain intact. The roughly 50 schools affiliated with Structural JI are still open, as is the network of publishing houses run by the organization.<sup>68</sup> These platforms have enabled the group to continue to recruit new members, spread propaganda, and, most importantly, maintain its social network. As long as JI-linked institutions continue to operate, Structural JI's survival seems all but guaranteed.

Ji's splinter groups are unlikely to remain operationally viable in 2025. If Top, Dulmatin, and Patek are any indication, high-profile militants who break from Structural JI and conduct violent attacks have relatively short life spans. The most violent and active JI splinters will probably remain anchored in the ungoverned corners of the southern Philippines. If the slow-going negotiations between the MILF and Manila bear fruit—a distinct possibility over the next decade and a half—this safe haven will probably become unviable. Some Non-structural JI members may remain active in Indonesia in 2025, but they would face an increasingly capable Indonesian counterterrorism apparatus.

In the nearer term, one wonders whether a new generation of JI members will follow the examples set by Top, Dulmatin, and Patek and conduct activities outside of the group's formal command structure. While possible, this scenario seems unlikely. For more than half a decade, Structural JI has prioritized *dawa* over violence. Those who disagree with this approach have probably already left the organization. Younger cadres who are eager for action probably recognize Structural JI's posture and will seek other, more aggressive platforms for activism. These alternative options are multiplying due to the recent proliferation in Indonesia of small, informal operational cells.<sup>69</sup> By the process of elimination, then, the only individuals left in Structural JI today are those patiently committed to the



group's long-term approach. This suggests that Structural JI's fragmentation will slow or cease in the years ahead.

Five factors seem most likely to alter the future trajectory of JI and its splinters through 2025. They are explored below.

## Ideological Resonance

Variations of the Salafi Jihadist ideology promoted by JI and like-minded groups and individuals have become embedded in certain Indonesian communities. From the height of the DI insurgency to the smaller cells and even individuals carrying out attacks today, the ideological resonance necessary for violent action persists, even if the organizational structures behind such attacks have atrophied. In addition, the Indonesian government's tacit tolerance of non-violent Islamist organizations has allowed militants to use those groups as a platform for recruitment and radicalization.<sup>70</sup> Prior to his arrest, for example, Ba'asyir used his new aboveground group, Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), to disseminate Salafi jihadi propaganda. All this suggests that a latent pool of recruits could be mobilized should Structural JI reengage in violence or should a new platform for terrorism emerge.

## Conflict

The second factor is the outbreak or escalation of conflict in Southeast Asia. As seen above, the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, sectarian conflicts in Indonesia, and violence in the southern Philippines were crucial to radicalizing, training, and mobilizing the JI network. Rumors about Patek aside, no Indonesians seem to have fought U.S. forces in Iraq or Afghanistan, so it is unlikely that conflict in far-off places such as Yemen or Somalia would mobilize the next generation of JI to the same extent as did the Afghan theater in the 1980s. Instead, the most likely combat opportunities for JI operatives in the future are the insurgencies in the southern Philippines, southern Thailand, and Burma or a fresh round of sectarian bloodshed in Indonesia.<sup>71</sup> Significant involvement in these conflicts could reinvigorate JI.

## Terrorist Patron

The third factor relates to the emergence of a new terrorist patron. As the foregoing analysis illustrates, al Qaeda core had a major impact on the evolution of JI. A new terror-

ist patron could have a similar effect. The transnational terrorist organization best positioned to support terrorism in Southeast Asia is probably Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Although LeT's network of training camps and financial resources could theoretically fill the void left by al Qaeda core's erosion, there is no indication that it has the intent to do so. That said, JI and LeT have cooperated in at least one instance in the past and this nexus could further develop if LeT's objectives were to expand to include Southeast Asia.<sup>72</sup>

Beyond LeT, other South Asian- or Middle Eastern-based terrorist groups could also become patrons for JI or its offshoots. Recent efforts by JI members and associated individuals to cultivate ties with militant groups abroad support this hypothesis. Abu Husna and Dr. Agus are clear examples of this. Both men served as senior JI operatives and were detained in Malaysia in 2008 before they could travel to Syria on a Qatar Airways flight.<sup>73</sup> According to an Australian government document, intelligence from their arrest "detailed JI's links and desire to renew its international terrorist links."<sup>74</sup> Muhammad Jibriel, the alleged conduit for foreign funds used in Top's July 2009 attack in Jakarta, also made significant efforts to develop relationships with militants from outside the region.<sup>75</sup> This suggests that individuals associated with Non-structural JI may also seek foreign patrons in the future.

## Leadership

The fourth factor pertains to leadership. The rise of a charismatic leader could breathe new life into Structural or Non-structural JI. Such a leader could potentially emerge from the population of incarcerated JI militants to be released in the coming years. Although the number of JI members behind bars is relatively small, many of them are hardened veterans with the proper bona fides to assume leadership positions.<sup>76</sup> Documented incidents of recidivism reinforce concerns that incarcerated militants could reengage in violent activity.<sup>77</sup>

## Strategic Calculus

The fifth and final factor worth contemplating is Structural JI's strategic calculus. Currently, Structural JI is focused on *dawa* in an effort to boost its strength, which its leaders see as a prerequisite for armed resistance. If and when JI's commanders believe that their organization is powerful

and popular enough to reengage in violence, they could resume terrorist attacks. Alternatively, the group's leadership could recalculate its decision to postpone violence. Although both scenarios seem unlikely at the moment, it is important to bear in mind that Structural JI's tactical decision to abandon terrorist attacks is not a renunciation of violence. The group remains committed to its long-term objective of creating an Islamic state and it will continue to pose a terrorist threat until it formally rejects violence, abandons its struggle, or is comprehensively dismantled.

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III, Sungkar ordered him and Hambali to travel to Burma in 1994 to assess whether Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) would serve as a suitable partner. Abbas and Hambali discovered that the ARIF's territory was inadequate for a JI training camp because the group "didn't have a suitable, well-protected area and were moving around too much." CSIS Interview with former JI commander, Jakarta, Indonesia. July 2, 2008.

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funds for the July 2009 hotel bombings, it is clear that Jibriel had met the late Pakistani Taliban leader Mehsud and that he was in regular communication with the media division of al-Qaeda, al-Sahab. He was also trying to send Indonesians for training in Waziristan, meeting with al-Qaeda members in Saudi Arabia, and planning to open an office in Cairo." See "Indonesia: Jihadi Surprise in Aceh," International Crisis Group, 14.

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