

CHAPTER 5

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In Southeast Asia, insurgency and terrorism overlap and global terrorists often exploit the local grievances and local resentments to spread the ideology of hate and violence. The resilience of the terrorist groups in the region comes from robust networking among the groups. There is however, no single ‘all-encompassing’ ‘big answer’ on how to respond to terrorism. As *Rohan Gunaratna* called as there is no “*magic bullet*” that will end terrorism in Southeast Asia.¹ A range of policy instruments would be required in an effective strategy against terrorism. These would include tactical counter-terrorism measures such as military force, intelligence, criminal law enforcement, and strategic initiatives at the political, socio-economic and ideological level. Since each of the initiatives also has their drawbacks and limitations, a balance must necessarily be maintained in pursuing each of the approaches.

Governments in Southeast Asia are facing a number of challenges in establishing a common front against terrorism. Countries in the region continue to be sensitive about sovereignty and non-interference norms. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation among the states through the ASEAN initiative.

There should be an improved coordination between the law enforcement agencies of the different countries in the region. This involves looking beyond one’s borders and exchanging information to understand the dynamics of modern terrorist networks. Usually, information and intelligence sharing can be arranged at a threshold, which does not clash with jurisdictional issues and does not come in conflict with politically sensitive sovereignty and non-interference norms. A common terrorism database would be most useful in the exchange of intelligence and information. The war against terrorism has had its successes, but it is far from over. Al-Qaeda and its affiliate terrorist groups, such as JI and Abu Sayyaf, are still at large and still dangerous. The world’s governments have taken actions aimed at severely

¹ Gunaratna, 9.

crippling the terrorists, but much more needs to be done. Improving law enforcement and reforming judicial systems, if fully implemented, can change the face of the war and help lead to the end of terrorism as a major international problem.² *Rohan Gunaratna* emphasizes on the government needs to ensure that the best brains are put in the right places and that they have a proper counter terrorism agenda - this means investing in developing counter-terrorism legislation, that means investing in proper counter terrorism training and finally in developing high grade, high quality intelligence.³ Intelligence is best understood as the collection, analysis and dissemination of information by parties in conflict or competition. What turns the simple pursuit of information into the business of intelligence is its purpose: gaining competitive advantage over adversaries.⁴

However, the success of any counterterrorism strategy is not in terms of the number of terrorists killed or captured alone. Use of force is appropriate to neutralize the immediate threat. But the use of military force alone could create new resentments and new grievances. Its indiscriminate use would give the terrorists reason to validate their actions and in turn increase their pool of recruits, supporters and sympathizers. The ideal counter terrorism policy would be a combination of hard and soft policies.

The fight against extremism and terrorism is a “war of ideas or values.”⁵ The radical ideology must be countered and discredited. It is necessary to isolate the terrorists, diminish the underlying conditions of violence, and employ public diplomacy to counter the propaganda of the radical extremists. This also involves changing the minds and winning the hearts of the wider Muslim community. As if we

² Dana R. Dillon, “**The War on Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Developing Law Enforcement,**” *Backgrounder* No. 1720, by the Heritage, 22 January 2004.

³ Asha Popatal, “**Declaring JI a terror group is starting point in fight against terror,**” *Channel News Asia Online*, 2 October 2005, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/171401/1/.html>.

⁴ Jennifer Sims, “**Intelligence to counter terror: The importance of all-source fusion,**” *Intelligence and National Security* 22, No. 1 (February 2007): 40.

⁵ Alexander Downer, “**The Campaign Against Terror: Wining the Battle of Ideas,**” speech at the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) General Conference, Jakarta, Indonesia, 8 December 2003, http://www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2003/03208_campaign_against_terror.html.

can get the Muslim communities on our side then the terrorists have no support and are seen by everyone as the bunch of thugs they really are.⁶

The challenge to radical views that supports acts of terrorism is likely to succeed only when it comes from deep within the Islamic tradition. Moderate Muslims therefore have a big role to play in countering the radical jihadist ideologies. The governments need to assist moderate, progressive Muslim leaders and intellectuals to negate the appeal of radical Islam. Inter-faith dialogues would be very helpful in breaking the resilience of the jihadist propaganda.

The governments need to address the grievances in the local context. Lack of legitimacy, control over economy and lack of legitimate means for political expression are the areas that terrorist groups exploit. Enforcing the rule of law and supporting social and economic upliftment would diminish the appeal of extremist views and make it difficult for the terrorist groups to flourish and sustain. At the same time, nonviolent alternatives to resolve local conflicts should be promoted. A secure environment and greater opportunities for people would help the conflicting parties reach political settlements faster.

Lack of effective legislation constrains governments' ability to counter the threats of terrorism. At the political level, this stems from the inability of the national leadership in making a compelling case against terrorism. It is therefore necessary that a broad-based public discourse on the illegitimacy of terrorism as a tactic, regardless of the legitimacy of the cause, be shaped. Governments need to adopt appropriate counter terrorism legal regime incorporating global best practices to interdict terrorists and make their operations difficult.

Given the fact that radicals in certain areas are misusing Islamic educational institutions, it is necessary to ensure that the states provide universal education based on a curriculum that promotes tolerance and respect for other cultures

⁶ Mick Smith, "**Winning the War on Terror?**", *Times Online*, March 28, 2006, http://timesonline.typepad.com/mick_smith/2006/03/winning_the_war.html.

and religions. Religious education has thrived in most of the under-developed regions, where states lack the organic capability to provide minimum levels of education to all its citizens. These states need to be assisted, both financially and technically, to promote inclusive educational system without, however, affecting the religious sensitivities in the concerned states.

The source of recruitment can be nipped through the active engagement and education of the communities. This is important, as terrorists draw sympathizers and supporters from the community, who protect them from the authorities and provide them with safe houses. The gap between research, policy-making, and law enforcement should be bridged and the latter should appreciate the importance of quality research through adequate fieldwork to develop an understanding of the context of the conflicts in the region. Building national resilience by not overreacting after a terrorist attack is very important. A speedy normalization process would defeat the immediate aims of the terrorists of disrupting normal life.

As ASEAN members highly open up their countries to tourists and investment entrepreneurs as to further enhance their economic strengths, nevertheless it can also generate security weaknesses. Following the 9/11 incident all ASEAN nations must *enhance security measures* and border security has been intensified to prevent the infiltration of undesirable persons. Strict immigration and security checks are carried out at all sea, air and land checkpoints.

It is widely believed that many terrorist activities are funded through a series of money laundering operations. It is vital that the integrity of banking systems is protected from such abuse. To strengthen the integrity of financial systems against abuse by terrorists and other criminal elements, all ASEAN members must fully support and comply with the Financial Action Task Force on Money Launderings Special Recommendations to Combat Financing of Terrorism. Law enforcement agencies, should direct ASEAN efforts towards practical measures and initiatives to meet the challenges from terrorism.

ASEAN Member Countries can consider designating a special unit within their countries to serve as a principal contact point with other foreign counterparts on counter-terrorism matters. This will facilitate the exchange of information among ASEAN Member Countries in the fight against terrorism. Example, Singapore's JCTC, which comprises the relevant local law enforcement and intelligence agencies working together to share information on terrorism, will play this role. ASEAN Member Countries can leverage on and further strengthen existing frameworks, such as the ASEANAPOL to discuss practical measures and explore avenues for regional co-operation against terrorism.

To *enhance the capabilities* of ASEAN Member Countries in the fight against terrorism, there should be training in bomb/explosive detection, post-blast investigation, airport security and passport/document security and inspection or any other areas that would enhance the capabilities of ASEAN Member Countries to counter terrorism.

Every country is potentially vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Although Singapore has crippled the JI cells and its plans in Singapore, the threat of terrorism has not disappeared and is not likely to go away for some time to come. Thailand caught Hambali in Ayutthaya⁷ on 12 August 2003, where he was allegedly planning to bomb a meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) group.⁸ Terrorism will continue to pose a serious threat to the security and stability of our region, ASEAN must committed in the fight against terrorism by putting in place practical measures and actively supporting international efforts to eradicate this threat. However, as ASEAN recognizes that given the global reach of terrorism, it is difficult for any individual country to fight terrorism on its own. It is therefore imperative for ASEAN member countries to continue to work together to tackle terrorism as a group,

⁷ According to the Royal Institute of Thailand the correct and full spelling of Ayutthaya is *Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya*, The Royal Institute of Thailand, http://www.royin.go.th/upload/246/FileUpload/417_4191.pdf.

⁸ Clinton Fernandes and Damien Kingsbury, "**Terrorism in archipelagic Southeast Asia,**" in *Violence in Between: Conflict & Security in archipelagic Southeast Asia*, ed. Damien Kingsbury (Singapore: ISEAS Publication, 2005), 21.

especially towards more practical and effective cooperation, so as to ensure peace and stability in the region.

It is also critical to extend cooperation between Southeast Asian countries from the security and intelligence domain to the domains of law enforcement and the judiciary. Furthermore, Southeast Asian governments must graduate from 'cooperation' to 'co-ordination' and 'collaboration' in joint and combined action in order to successfully combat terrorism as the responsibility for combating terrorism must rest with governments acting on behalf of their people.⁹ For instance, terrorism will persist in the Southern part of Thailand as long as Thai government does not work collaboratively with Malaysia. So, the '*Cooperative Security Theory: Functionalist Approach*' is highlighted its strength to utilize in enhancing cooperation on counterterrorism within ASEAN members. As terrorism nowadays becomes increasingly transnational, the counter-terrorism of the future must be as well, with initiative in building common databases, exchange personnel, joint training, combining operations, sharing experience, and transferring expertise.

To reduce the threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia, it is essential to target both the indigenous and the foreign groups that are active in Southeast Asia. Therefore, severing Al Qaeda's ideological and operational links to the region is of paramount importance. Indeed, since 9/11, there have been over 100 attacks worldwide carried out by Al Qaeda and its associates, while a dozen attempted attacks in Southeast Asia have been aborted or disrupted. The Bali, Mindanao and Karachi bombings have also demonstrated that the Islamic terrorist threat has moved beyond Al Qaeda. Its regional associates, such as the Southeast Asian groups, are as lethal as their parent organization. They have learnt and will increasingly use Al Qaeda tactics such as hijacking and crashing aircraft, contact poisons, anti-aircraft weapons, and a range of other techniques to inflict mass fatalities on their enemies.¹⁰

⁹ Marks, 58.

¹⁰ Gunaratna, 11.

Regional cooperation may not be adequate against the growth and rapid adjustment of the 21st century terrorists. Bringing in international/global funds and assistances against terrorism should be developed to assist poor countries or groups of countries that lack the capacity to fight domestic terrorism. For the problems of terrorism within its terrain ASEAN members must overcome the tendency of objecting everything by pointing to the 'ASEAN Ways' approach by not allowing others to provoke concerns or helping to find ways out. Terrorists are capable to operate globally with multiple-linkages at every inch on earth. Moreover, the transnational issues of terrorism are trans-border reach and needed to have joint-cooperation as to make tackle them down. Sustaining a counter-terrorism campaign requires substantial resources through a larger pool of collaboration from the developed nations. As most countries in the developing world are affected by terrorism and lack of both trained manpower and the resources to fight a protracted anti-terrorist campaign. As what *Rohan Guneratna* said that "whether you are the rich or poor governments of the world, you must develop a *cooperative approach* in fight against terrorism".¹¹ *Damien Kingsbury* also pointed out that the future of development of ASEAN is likely to be based on the strength and character of the relationships of member states forged with one another and with, more powerful external actors.¹² 'Bottom up' approach that respects contextual degree within Southeast Asian region and which calls for a more comprehensive, indirect counterterrorism policy. It draws from expert views from within (also added with outside) Southeast Asia and it assumes that prescriptions for coping with the terrorist threat within the region must be tailored specifically to regional and national realities and conditions. In short, no particular prescription or paradigm can adequately deal with the complexities of the Southeast Asian situation.¹³

Nevertheless, 11 September 2001 provided the forward motion for the quite dynamic response within the region. These responses, however, have varied from country to country. A critical evaluation of these responses reveals differences in

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹² Damien Kingsbury, "Southeast Asia: A Community of Diversity," *Politics & Policy* 35, No. 1 (2007): 6-25.

¹³ Tan and Ramakrishna, 93.

efficacy and priorities, demonstrating once again the complex nature of terrorism in Southeast Asia. These complexities point to the necessity for a more broad-based strategy that takes into account the presence of fundamental grievance. Indeed, it is important to understand these complexities if an appropriate and viable counter-terrorist strategy are to be devised. As *Andrew Tan* suggested that “the difficulties in addressing the varied fundamental grievances as well as the difficulties encountered in meeting the challenges posed by terrorism mean that the war against terrorism will be long-drawn out, *with containment*, not victory, *being the most realistic outcome*.”¹⁴

The threat posed by the Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda-linked international terrorism in the region and elsewhere cannot be eliminated by punitive security measures alone. The strategy must be both preventive as well as punitive, involving comprehensive campaigns that embrace political, socio-economic and conventional security measures. In the preventive sphere, discourse and attention cannot be focused upon the distortion and exploitation of Islamic teachings alone, or on fora for dialogue among faiths and civilizations that are so trendy now. It must also address the political and socio-economic drivers of international terrorism, including the Palestinian issue, Western policies in the Middle East, political oppression and marginalization, and poverty. In the punitive sphere measures must include the enhancement of the intelligence and operational capacity of the security agencies, as well as more forthcoming and effective collaboration among the security agencies within a country and among countries.¹⁵

The international campaign against terrorism can succeed only if it is sustained on a long term basis and targets terrorist cells and networks wherever they exist and as long as they exist. As *Brahma Chellany* depicted that “terrorism is the cowards’ weapon, as it involves sneakiness and obviates facing enemy”.¹⁶ The only

¹⁴ Tan, “**Southeast Asia as the ‘Second Front’ in the War against Terrorism: Evaluating Threat and Responses**,” 114.

¹⁵ Mohamed Jawhar Hassan, “**Security Environment in Southeast Asia**,” paper presented at the ASEAN Regional Forum, The First Plenary Meeting of Experts and Eminent Persons, Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, 29-30 June 2006.

¹⁶ Chellaney, 108-109.

defense against the sly, murderous terrorists is offense aimed at hounding, disrupting, and smashing their cells, networks, and safe havens. Against covert, unconventional aggression, counteraction must also employ clandestine, unconventional methods in order to strike at the heart of a terrorist group and disrupt its cohesion, credibility, and operational capacity.

Never before there has been a greater need for close international cooperation on intelligence and law enforcement, especially because of the stateless nature of some terrorists. The threat posed by the Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda-linked international terrorism in the region and elsewhere cannot be eliminated by punitive security measures alone. The strategy must be both preventive as well as punitive, involving comprehensive campaigns that embrace political, socio-economic and conventional security measures. In the preventive sphere, discourse and attention cannot be focused upon the distortion and exploitation of Islamic teachings alone, or on fora for dialogue among faiths and civilizations that are so trendy now. It must also address the political and socio-economic drivers of international terrorism, including the Palestinian issue, Western policies in the Middle East, political oppression and marginalization, and poverty. In the punitive sphere measures must include the enhancement of the intelligence and operational capacity of the security agencies, as well as more forthcoming and effective collaboration among the security agencies within a country and among countries.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

From the study of this topic which has explored and explained with more fundamental ways to identify the terrorists in Southeast Asia. The study has provided clearer image on the ASEAN cooperation on counterterrorism after the 9/11 incident in 2001. Another major event that conveyed the state members to thoroughly realize that it happened in their own soil was the Bali incident in 2003. These are main occasions that why cooperation on counterterrorism in Southeast Asia has really becoming a main issue. As prior 9/11 and Bali incident, terrorism topic would go under the transnational crime concern but later on elevate its significant to a mainframe point of concern.

Later on, this research also provided impacts from terrorism which have made major security threat to the region as a whole. By illustrate key terrorist groups in each country and provided how they bond with worldwide terrorist group like Al-Qaeda. Moreover, it also elaborates on how ASEAN response and lift up those concerns with cooperation framework both within internal and further broaden with external support and assistance. Vividly, the cooperation at first stage has seen as the bilateral cooperation with major state like the United States. At the outset, the main reason of conducting bilateral cooperation between some ASEAN members and the US was due to economical support and assistance despite the cooperation on counterterrorism came along closely. However, rock-solid militarized strategies of the US on war on terror seem to be unsuitable to the situation in Southeast Asia as the fact of a divergence of internal differences among ASEAN members. In addition, governments overlook academic observations and researches that have gathered key data and figures and essential in-dept details. Merged with lack of cooperation or refuse to cooperate from local people which have ground details and more up-to-date information. In this case it resulted in difficulties of rapid counter attack or coming up with accurate strategy.

Importantly, the research also discovers the main obstacles of the ineffective cooperation firstly, due to the blaming game among Southeast Asian neighboring countries. By pointing to each other as a hub of terrorist networks or even transit places. As response to others' indictment they would oppose and defense to use the Southeast Asian nations' organization fundamental principal of non-interference and non-intervention that other members could not interfere its internal affairs. It is not a solid answer to the hypothesis of this research that non-intervention and non-interference are the pure answer of the main obstacles of ineffective cooperation of ASEAN cooperation on counterterrorism. As most of the data and information have concluded to the point that it has been use most of the time for political argument. Like Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra blamed Malaysia as a hub for recruiting and training terrorists. While, Malaysia pointing Indonesia as a paradise place for terrorists. This blaming game must be stop; a political gain on one side is a severe pain for others. If this kind of political exploitation still going on the true commitment to deal with counterterrorism in Southeast Asia will go to nowhere.

But more significantly is on the second critical obstacle, through lack of experts, outdated tools and equipments in most of member states also generate the far behind advanced and brisk terrorist movements. There are a few countries that could strongly counterterrorism at right away like Singapore and Malaysia which have much more integrated system with all kinds of advanced technology, know-how and well-trained officials. While others still trapped in weak immigration control, corrupted officials, loosen border patrol and obsolete equipments.

The second decisive obstacle of inappropriate counterterrorism-system of ASEAN member states provide much more tangible answers to the research question of whether it is a success or failure. It could be on the failure side due to the fact that terrorist groups still activate and exist in the region. Terrorist groups change their strategy and target all the time, while government officials are far behind them. However, it is also could be a success too. As the 9/11 and Bali incident occurred ASEAN members eagerly gather to launch ASEAN Joint Declaration on Counter International Terrorism. More proper steps and progression to deal with international

terrorism were carried out. Another major change should be more channels to provide and share valuable terrorists' information among ASEAN members. If it could hurt other member country's image then both sides should talk secretly. For instance Prime Minister General Surayud Chulanont blamed the Tom Yum Kung restaurants in Malaysia as a chief financial supporter to the insurgent group in the Deep South of Thailand. He should talk with Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi or let the National Security Council do their work, but not to spread the secret information into public news.

Thirdly, the organization itself, ASEAN, could not do much as it could. The state members aware of the association when it need something but not trying to contribute that much. The secretariat is more like organizer to conduct the meeting instead of pushing the issue and forcefully make the declaration into a more action and active approach. Strong secretariat would be a perfect answer with vigorously commitment of state members to help each other in order to counterterrorism. A representative of each member could be another solution as they could foresee the development of this topic.

Moreover, this research also found out that domestic insurgent groups still have major impact to the regional security concern. And they also coupled with regional terrorist groups and linked into a wider perspective like global-link terrorist network. These convey regional security threat and interrupting public life and economic growth of the region. Impact of terrorism came along into various aspects such as psychological, economical, security and political concerns. So as to have a flourish economic development and stabilize political progress every parts of society must join hand-in-hand to contribute and commit to fight against terrorists.