Islamic State’s Global Expansion: A Renewed Threat To Asia?
By Rohan Gunaratna

US President Donald Trump led the chest-thumping in March this year over what he described as the complete eradication of the Islamic State after the fall of the group’s last stronghold in Baghouz, Syria.

What he and others failed to realize, or chose to ignore, is how far IS has penetrated countries around the world, including in South Asia and Southeast Asia. In short, the IS Caliphate is down but not out. Rohan Gunaratna provides a detailed account of the group’s continuing threat to stability and security.

THE THREAT OF the Islamic State (IS) in Asia reached a new high after the fall of the physical Caliphate with the loss of Baghouz, Syria on March 23. Although IS lost its territorial control, its leadership, headed by Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, is alive. It is entering a new phase to spread its influence and operations worldwide. Just like how it’s mother group al Qaeda went global after it was dislodged from Afghanistan following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, IS now is expanding globally.

With 63 percent of Muslims living in Asia, the region is a big target for IS, in both the Asian physical and cyber space. Asian governments are underprepared or unprepared to fight the threat.

With its losses in Iraq and Syria, IS decentralized by dispatching nearly 100 operatives, both Iraqi and foreign, to its wilayats (provinces) and other countries with support networks. To coordinate this new phase, IS supporters and sympathizers worldwide rely on both IS central and IS bridgeheads.

After losing its last stronghold in Syria, IS mounted a devastating attack in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday 2019. The scale, intensity and magnitude demonstrated the new face of the threat. Throughout Asia, both IS central and its decentralized structures are directing, enabling and inspiring attacks. The leadership is also relying more on Afghanistan as a forward headquarters. The drawdown of US forces from Afghanistan will create a vacuum that will allow for IS growth not only in Afghanistan but in Central, South, Southeast and Northeast Asia. Although Xinjiang, bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan, is China’s western frontline in the fight against terrorism, Beijing is not ready to deepen its overseas military presence.

The Russian-led coalition force in Syria also made a difference in eroding IS power. The US worked with Iraqi forces to eliminate the last stronghold of IS, and with Kurdish forces to weaken IS in Syria. However, to claim IS has been defeated in Iraq and Syria is not accurate. It maintains a significant presence in the Euphrates Valley and beyond.1 Aimed at US disengagement from Syria and Iraq, US President Donald Trump’s statement immediately after the IS loss of Baghouz was premature. “You kept hearing it was 90 percent, 92 percent, the caliphate in Syria. Now it’s 100 percent [that has been destroyed],” Trump said.2

Such a hasty withdrawal without assessing IS will have an impact worldwide.3 In an interconnected world, an abrupt withdrawal could impact the global threat landscape. While IS lost physical territory in Syria and Iraq, the IS attacks in Iraq and Syria are still the highest, according to the IS news agency, Amaq, and other sources. Amaq claimed 1,800 attacks that killed or injured 8,000 civilians and security personnel during the first six months of 2019.4 Although IS figures are exaggerated, it is clear that the Middle East remains the most active IS theater. In Syria, IS propaganda claimed that it killed and injured 1,910 in 534 attacks, and in Iraq, IS killed and injured 1,692 in 666 attacks.

Most of its attacks were in theaters of conflict, but IS also developed capabilities to operate off the battlefield. With its mastery in cyberspace, IS radicalized the vulnerability online and co-opted like-minded threat groups. The threat is not only from IS but from its forerunner, al Qaeda and its affiliates. Al Qaeda-centric groups, notably HTS in Syria, al Shabab in Africa, the Taliban in Afghanistan and others, continued to pose a threat, while IS is the dominant global player.

GLOBE EXPANSION
A review of the attacks outside Iraq and Syria in the first half of 2019 demonstrates that the IS-centric threat has spread to sub-Saharan Africa, notably the Sahel, and to Asia, notably to South Asia. In Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Mali and Burkina Faso, IS propaganda claimed it killed or injured 1,178 in 138 attacks, and in Somalia, it killed or injured 114 in 45 attacks. The threat spread to Africa’s deep south with 18 attacks, according to IS, killing or injuring 115 in Congo and Mozambique, a new trend. In Afghanistan, IS killed or injured 875 in 180 attacks, and in Pakistan, it killed or injured 20 in 12 attacks. In Sri Lanka, the IS attack against churches and hotels killed or injured 1,000. The threat in South Asia included attacks in India and Bangladesh, demonstrating a significant rise in operations. Further afield in Southeast Asia, IS reported 21 attacks in Indonesia and the Philippines, where 461 were killed or injured. The single biggest attack was carried out by an Indonesian couple — both deportees from Turkey seeking entry to Iraq and Syria — who bombed a cathedral in the southern Philippines in January 2019.

Worldwide IS not only focused on killing, maiming and injuring but destroying and damaging property and vehicles. IS refurbished its wilayat in South Asia by appointing new leaders or declaring new provinces following attacks in Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, three countries with a combined 300 million Muslims.

In Asia, the epicenter of terrorism is spreading to Afghanistan, the likely headquarters of IS external operations in Asia.

---

2 Ryan Pickrell, “Trump declares 100 percent of the ISIS caliphate has been liberated, but forces on the ground say it’s not over yet,” Business Insider US, Feb. 28, 2019, www.businessinsider.com/trump-declares-100-of-the-isis-caliphate-has-been-liberated-2019-2?r=US&IR=T
4 “Results of Attacks by Islamic State Fighters During First Half of 2019,” Amiq Agency, July 24, 2019
5 Ibid
6 Ibid
7 Ibid
8 Ibid
9 Ibid
THE RISE OF ISLAMIC STATE IN ASIA

Historically, the rise of Islamist groups in Asia is traced to the anti-Soviet multinational Afghan mujahidin campaign beginning in the 1980s. After the defeat of the Soviets, the foreign fighters remained in tribal Pakistan and Afghanistan. They formed Al Qaeda in 1988 and the Afghan Taliban in 1995. With the rise of Al Qaeda after 2014, the Taliban, a group aligned with Al Qaeda, opposed IS. The Taliban remains the dominant player, but IS in Afghanistan created a Wilayat, Khorasan, and is gaining strength because it is a well-organized and presents a growing threat to both the Afghan government and the Taliban. In the coming years, IS will diminish in Syria and Iraq, but will expand in South Asia. In the eastern provinces of Afghanistan, IS has become a powerful militia to the extent that it is displacing the Afghan Taliban in fighting. Its current strength in Afghanistan is estimated at between 2,000 and 2,500 fighters.10 The Taliban members are divided into three categories. The sympathizers and supporters are nearing 100,000. Active Taliban fighters in Afghanistan are nearing 60,000. With Pakistani security forces hunting IS actively on its soil, IS fighters of Pakistani origin are largely located in Afghanistan. The emergence of IS led to a split in the largest Pakistani Taliban group, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), from within and dislodged the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which has relocated from Afghanistan, from the Taliban-al-Qaeda league. Such divisions provide IS with the opportunity to form alliances, be an unpredictable security threat and rival the Taliban.11

The IS presence in Afghanistan has implications for the Taliban peace talks with the US and with Pakistan. The Taliban keep stressing that they want an Islamic government in Afghanistan. In the light of the growing IS strength and ruthless nature, the Taliban is likely to continue to demand an Islamic government. The talks are likely to fail in the short term. The Afghan Taliban is unwilling to compromise and accommodate the Afghan government in a power-sharing arrangement.

The number of IS operatives in Pakistan is a few hundred, but the Islamist threat there is significant. Although they are ideologically and operationally close, Afghanistan and Pakistan IS leadership operate independently.

Increasingly, IS Khorasan is focusing on Afghanistan and Central Asia. About 5,500 Central Asians are among the most notorious IS groups in the region, most of the Moro National Liberation Front, Janjalani received a scholarship to study at Umm ul Qura in Mecca where he studied Arabic in 1984-1986. After graduating, he received a scholarship to Dawah University in Tripoli in 1988 to pursue a master’s degree. He did not travel to Pakistan or Afghanistan, as claimed, but maintained links with Osma bin Laden. From Medina, Mohamad Jamal Khalifa (MJK), the brother-in-law of bin Laden, travelled to Manila and built a bridge to al Qaeda. The Abu Sayyaf Group has morphed into IS. With support from groups in Malaysia and Indonesia, IS Philippines besieged Marawi City in 2017, the defining IS event in the region. Saudi Arabia also offered scholarships to South-East Asians to study in Saudi and Saudi-funded schools in Yemen, Pakistan and Indonesia, with negligible results. For example, the Saudi-funded Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab (LIIA) in Jakarta produced Aman Abdurrahman, an IS leader; Rizieq Syihab, the leader of the radical Islamic Defenders Front; and Jafar Umar Thalib, leader of the violent Laskar Jihad militia. While Al Qaeda created the terrorist infrastructure in Southeast Asia, most of the al Qaeda-centric groups have transformed into IS. Osma bin Laden’s brother-in-law, MJK, operated in the Philippines, building the terrorist infrastructure. He established the International Islamic Relief

Most of the Central Asians recruited by IS and HTS lived outside Central Asia, mostly in Turkey, the Gulf and Russia. “Some 80 to 90 percent of ISIS fighters from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are radicalized and recruited while in Russia as migrant workers,” according to Noah Tucker, author of a report on Central Asian involvement in the conflict in Syria and Iraq.12

THE THREAT IN SOUTH ASIA

IS declared a series of Wilayats in South Asia, and as a result the threat has grown in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India. The IS threat in the area will continue to grow. IS in Afghanistan is also attempting to infiltrate tribal Pakistan and then mainland Pakistan. Although Pakistani authorities are fighting back, IS now targets civilians and government officers in Pakistan. The threat will increase with the drawdown of foreign troops from Afghanistan. In 2018 and 2019, Afghanistan emerged as a venue for foreign fighters. With the difficulties of transit through Pakistan, foreign fighters are travelling through Iran to Afghanistan. With the challenge of traveling to Iraq and Syria, foreign fighters are joining both IS and Afghan Taliban to fight the US, NATO and Afghan forces. The early fighters came from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Algeria, Indonesia, France, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan.

The many nationalities present demonstrate the future threat to Central Asia and beyond, including Southeast Asia. A key Indonesian IS leader, Chaniago Saifulllah, who was from West Sumatra, co-ordinated operations in Southeast Asia and was killed in Afghanistan by US forces in August 2019. Although Indonesia’s Special Forces unit, Densus 88, has said at least 11 Indonesian fighters and family members are in Afghanistan, the numbers are likely higher. The build-up was not only for training but to safely locate key leaders who direct operations.

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and the rise of IS in the Middle East are an important phase in the development of IS in Afghanistan. The IS threat in Afghanistan is especially dangerous for the Afghans. The IS threat in Afghanistan is estimated at between 2,000 and 2,500 fighters.10 The Taliban members are divided into three categories. The sympathizers and supporters are nearing 100,000. Active Taliban fighters in Afghanistan are nearing 60,000. With Pakistani security forces hunting IS actively on its soil, IS fighters of Pakistani origin are largely located in Afghanistan. The emergence of IS led to a split in the largest Pakistani Taliban group, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), from within and dislodged the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which has relocated from Afghanistan, from the Taliban-al-Qaeda league. Such divisions provide IS with the opportunity to form alliances, be an unpredictable security threat and rival the Taliban.11

The IS presence in Afghanistan has implications for the Taliban peace talks with the US and with Pakistan. The Taliban keep stressing that they want an Islamic government in Afghanistan. In the light of the growing IS strength and ruthless nature, the Taliban is likely to continue to demand an Islamic government. The talks are likely to fail in the short term. The Afghan Taliban is unwilling to compromise and accommodate the Afghan government in a power-sharing arrangement.

The number of IS operatives in Pakistan is a few hundred, but the Islamist threat there is significant. Although they are ideologically and operationally close, Afghanistan and Pakistan IS leadership operate independently.

Increasingly, IS Khorasan is focusing on Afghanistan and Central Asia. About 5,500 Central Asians are among the most notorious IS groups in the region, most of the Moro National Liberation Front, Janjalani received a scholarship to study at Umm ul Qura in Mecca where he studied Arabic in 1984-1986. After graduating, he received a scholarship to Dawah University in Tripoli in 1988 to pursue a master’s degree. He did not travel to Pakistan or Afghanistan, as claimed, but maintained links with Osma bin Laden. From Medina, Mohamad Jamal Khalifa (MJK), the brother-in-law of bin Laden, travelled to Manila and built a bridge to al Qaeda. The Abu Sayyaf Group has morphed into IS. With support from groups in Malaysia and Indonesia, IS Philippines besieged Marawi City in 2017, the defining IS event in the region. Saudi Arabia also offered scholarships to South-East Asians to study in Saudi and Saudi-funded schools in Yemen, Pakistan and Indonesia, with negligible results. For example, the Saudi-funded Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab (LIIA) in Jakarta produced Aman Abdurrahman, an IS leader; Rizieq Syihab, the leader of the radical Islamic Defenders Front; and Jafar Umar Thalib, leader of the violent Laskar Jihad militia. While Al Qaeda created the terrorist infrastructure in Southeast Asia, most of the al Qaeda-centric groups have transformed into IS. Osma bin Laden’s brother-in-law, MJK, operated in the Philippines, building the terrorist infrastructure. He established the International Islamic Relief

Most of the Central Asians recruited by IS and HTS lived outside Central Asia, mostly in Turkey, the Gulf and Russia. “Some 80 to 90 percent of ISIS fighters from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are radicalized and recruited while in Russia as migrant workers,” according to Noah Tucker, author of a report on Central Asian involvement in the conflict in Syria and Iraq.12

THE THREAT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Southeast Asian threat landscape was largely shaped by the developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 1990s and Iraq and Syria in the 2000s and 2010s. The leaders of dozens of threat groups from Southeast Asia were educated in the Middle East and North Africa and a thousand or so fighters trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Abdulrajak Janjalani, who founded the Philippines-based Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the most notorious threat group in the region, studied in Saudi Arabia and Libya. A former member of the Moro National Liberation Front, Janjalani received a scholarship to study at Umm ul Qura in Mecca where he studied Arabic in 1984-1986. After graduating, he received a scholarship from Dawah University in Tripoli in 1988 to pursue a master’s degree. He did not travel to Pakistan or Afghanistan, as claimed, but maintained links with Osma bin Laden. From Medina, Mohamad Jamal Khalifa (MJK), the brother-in-law of bin Laden, travelled to Manila and built a bridge to al Qaeda. The Abu Sayyaf Group has morphed into IS. With support from groups in Malaysia and Indonesia, IS Philippines besieged Marawi City in 2017, the defining IS event in the region. Saudi Arabia also offered scholarships to South-East Asians to study in Saudi and Saudi-funded schools in Yemen, Pakistan and Indonesia, with negligible results. For example, the Saudi-funded Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab (LIIA) in Jakarta produced Aman Abdurrahman, an IS leader; Rizieq Syihab, the leader of the radical Islamic Defenders Front; and Jafar Umar Thalib, leader of the violent Laskar Jihad militia. While Al Qaeda created the terrorist infrastructure in Southeast Asia, most of the al Qaeda-centric groups have transformed into IS. Osma bin Laden’s brother-in-law, MJK, operated in the Philippines, building the terrorist infrastructure. He established the International Islamic Relief

Worldwide IS not only focused on killing, maiming and injuring but destroying and damaging property and vehicles.
Organization (IIRO) in Manila and he infiltrated 200 NGOs in the Philippines and Indonesia. In Marawi in 1989, MJK established Darul Imam, the institute to radicalize a new generation of recruits and built a training camp led by an Egyptian commando, Abu Ubaidah. Among those recruited by MJK in the Philippines were a dozen other leaders, ideologues, instructors and managers of terrorist operations. He also funded the first World Trade Center bomber, Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, who developed the prototype for the 9/11 attacks.

After 9/11, Philippine forces arrested Arabs in Zamboanga and Cotabato. Among the prominent Arabs arrested was Mohammed Sabri Salamat, director of a Koranic school in Cotabato, and another associate of MJK. He had married a Filipina convert. After MJK left the Philippines, his properties were managed by Mahmoud Afif from Jordan, who arrived in the late 1980s and worked with MJK in co-ordinating the Arabs in the Philippines. When ASG needed funds, MJK recommended that the group contact Mahmoud. In January 2001, when an ASG representative contacted MJK for funding, MJK introduced Mahmoud as a source. At that time, MJK was in Sudan and Mahmoud was in Zamboanga. The ASG representative contacted Mahmoud at the Santa Barbara mosque in Zamboanga. The Southeast Asian region was used extensively by the Saudi networks in the lead-up to 9/11. Several Saudi 9/11 operatives, including hijackers, travelled to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. The 9/11 summit was held in Malaysia in January 2000. The first two hijackers to enter the US, Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdar, both of whom were Saudi, entered the US from Southeast Asia.

The Al Qaeda terrorist networks used Malaysia extensively until the Malaysian Special Branch targeted their capabilities starting in 2001. The official Al Qaeda website, alneda.com, was hosted out of a Malaysian server until it was shut down in 2002. Similarly, Singapore’s Internal Security Department (ISD) disrupted a major Al Qaeda operation to attack diplomatic and other targets in the city-state. With IS creating a presence in its neighborhood, including the declaration of a Wilayat in Southeast Asia, the threat to Singapore remains significant. Working with partners and unilaterally, the Singapore ISD has disrupted attacks both from overseas and from within, including plots to attack Jewish targets.

With the rise of IS in Southeast Asia in 2014, threat groups in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines converged in the southern Philippines, the regional training base for Southeast Asian fighters. Similarly, Southeast Asians who travelled to Syria and Iraq formed a battalion and started to collaborate both on and off the battlefield. A Filipino, Mohammad Reza Lahaman Kiram, Malaysian Mohammad Rafi Udin and Indonesian Mohammed Karim Yusop Faiz, alias Abu Walid, took part in an IS style beheading in a June 2016 video made by IS in Syria. In preparation for IS to declare a Wilayat or province in the southern Philippines, the IS centric groups united and pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr Baghdadi. After an IS emissary from Malaysia, Mahmoud bin Ahmed, visited the Philippines, the ASG deputy and Basilan island leader Isnilon Hapilon broke away from ASG. Guided by Mahmoud, Hapilon created an IS entity in the Sulu archipelago and later co-opted groups in Mindanao and besieged Marawi in May 2017. To declare a Wilayat East Asia, IS central recommended that Hapilon...
A second suicide attack was mounted by an Indonesian couple during mass in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Jolo, Sulu on Jan. 27. The female suicide bomber from Germany who mounted an attack at the entrance of the church while security guards were on duty. Another policeman was stabbed to death at the headquarters of the elite Mobile Brigade police. On May 13, 2018, three churches were attacked in Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia, by a family of suicide bombers linked to IS. Indonesians were shocked by the incident. Another policeman was stabbed to death at the headquarters of the elite Mobile Brigade police. On May 13, 2018, three churches were attacked in Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia, by a family of suicide bombers linked to IS. Indonesians were shocked by the incident. The Philippines should take preventive and pre-emptive measures to contain, isolate and eliminate IS from taking root on Philippine soil. The governments in the region and beyond should work with the Philippines to dismantle the IS nucleus in the country and keep it from expanding and threatening the region and beyond. Unless IS in Mindanao is contained, isolated and eliminated, the threat will only spread. The 12,000 troops that fought in Marawi and other forces have the mindset to take on these IS-centric groups. The IS entities are far more dangerous than traditional Muslim separatists, because IS wants to create an Islamic State rather than an ethno-nationalist entity.

The threat in Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, spread with the declaration of a caliphate by IS in June 2014. On Jan. 14, 2016, the IS affiliate in Indonesia, Jamaat Ansharut Daulah, attacked multiple targets near the Sarinah shopping mall in central Jakarta. This included suicide attackers and gunmen directed by Aman Abdur Rahman, the IS leader. Eight people — four attackers and four civilians (three Indonesians and an Algerian-Canadian) — were killed, and 23 others injured. Indonesian IS inmates and detainees besieged a prison near Jakarta in May 2018. The three-day standoff between police and inmates occurred at the Police's Mobile Brigade Corps headquarters in Depok, West Java. Five police officers lost their lives, with one inmate killed after being shot by the police. Four policemen were also injured in the incident. Another policeman was stabbed to death at the headquarters of the elite Mobile Brigade police. On May 13, 2018, three churches were attacked in Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia, by a family of suicide bombers linked to IS. Indonesians were shocked by the idea of children being used in the attack.

A total of 691 Indonesians and their family members travelled to Iraq and Syria. About 900 terrorists were arrested in Indonesia during the same period. The partnership between Southeast Asian military and police forces and the US has largely helped keep the region safe from attacks. In Indonesia, the Special Forces unit, Densus 88, has managed the threat of terrorism effectively. The challenge has been the failure of the government to manage the threat of radicalization and several political parties that work with Islamist groups, including extremists and terrorist groups. Indonesian society is experiencing growing radicalization, intolerance and the erosion of support for the inclusive national ideology (Pancasila) as a national survey has affirmed growing support for violence and the establishment of an Islamic State, including among government officials and youth, the next generation of Indonesians. The presidential and parliamentary elections held on April 17 demonstrated the long-term strategic threat Indonesia faces. The election results can be read as showing a steadfast decline in support for Pancasila and growing support for implementing Sharia. While President Joko Widodo was reelected, his challenger, ex-general Prabowo Subianto, lured Islamists and even terrorists to support him. In order to attract Muslim votes, Joko, popularly known as Jokowi, co-opted 76-year-old Muslim cleric Mufid Amin, a moderate Islamist, as his vice presidential candidate, and even wanted to release Abu Bakr Bashir, the leader of the group responsible for the Bali bombings, from prison. In the world’s fourth most populous nation both Prabowo, who is not known to be very religious and who comes from a mixed Christian-Muslim family, and centrist Jokowi, turned to the religious right. Prabowo received 44 percent of the vote, carrying traditionally conservative strongholds handily, while Jokowi, with a Muslim-cleric running mate, received 55 percent and up to 90 percent of the non-Muslim vote.

The threat in Thailand has been confined to the Muslim areas in the south in the form of both an insurgency and terrorism. The largest number of deaths and injuries were reported from Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Songkhla provinces. These groups receive support from individuals...
GLOBAL ASIA Feature Essay Islamic State’s Global Expansion: A Renewed Threat To Asia?

from the northeastern part of Malaysia, notably Kelantan. Although there were attacks by the Lebanese Hezbollah and the al Qaeda-associated Turkistan Islamic Party in Bangkok, the most significant and sustained threat emanated from Pattani groups in the south fighting for independence. However, there are early signs that at least a segment of the nationalist insurgency is gradually transforming into an Islamist campaign.

The latest significant attack by a Pattani threat group was on July 25, 2019, when a military post was attacked. The group also issued another warning on July 26, 2019: “People, please stay away from Barbee ... The attack might take place anywhere and anytime. Please be careful, Pattani people.”

IS and al Qaeda affiliated groups in Malaysia have procured weapons from threat groups in Thailand. A few hundred Muslims in Thailand’s south support IS. They are mostly from Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK), the Salafi members of BRN-C.

**CONCLUSION**

A wave of political, religious and cultural radicalization is driving hate and terrorism throughout Asia. With IS entering a new phase, Asian governments should manage the extent of the emerging threat through their own security and intelligence agencies. The Indonesian Minister of Defense Ryamizard Ryacudu has succeeded in getting defense intelligence agencies in the region to collaborate. He helped create ASEAN Our Eyes (AOE) to share strategic intelligence to confront regional terrorist networks. In the future, AOE collaboration will include five streams of intelligence at strategic, operational and tactical levels. The first stream is defense intelligence, the second military intelligence, the third law enforcement intelligence, the fourth national security intelligence, and the fifth open source intelligence, especially social media intelligence. Like the world’s largest intelligence sharing and exchange platform, Five Eyes (involving the US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the UK), Our Eyes should expand its membership beyond ASEAN to other Asian and non-Asian countries to secure both Asia and the world.

Superpower and geopolitical rivalry are hurting global peace and stability. With the globalization of the IS threat and the likelihood of its collaboration with al Qaeda, governments should shed their geopolitical egos and work together to fight IS and al Qaeda.

Working with governments where IS has seeded a presence, the international coalition will need to contain, isolate and eliminate the IS leadership at the core and periphery. Similarly, governments will need to broaden their strategies, especially in building partnerships with civil society to reach out to Muslim communities to prevent radicalization. Tackling the new phase of threat will require a shift in the mindset of government thinking. To thwart IS worldwide, governments should move from a whole-of-nation to a whole-of-region and whole-of-world response. Managing the emerging wave of exclusivism, extremism and terrorism will require a multidimensional, multiagency, multi-jurisdictional and multinational response. Rather than get trapped in superpower and geopolitical rivalry, Asian governments should build sub-regional, regional and global partnerships to fight back.

Rohan Gunaratna is Professor of Security Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is a counter terrorism trainer for military forces, law enforcement authorities and national security agencies. He is co-author of *Three Pillars of Radicalization: Needs, Networks and Narratives* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

15 Barbee means pig, an abusive word in Yawi used to refer to Thai police and soldiers in southern Thailand.