JIHADISTS ASSEMBLE:
THE RISE OF MILITANT ISLAMISM
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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I certify that this dissertation is my own original work. To the best of my knowledge, it contains no material that has been accepted for the award of a degree or diploma in any university and contains no material previously published by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States and the Bali bombings in Indonesia the following year, Southeast Asia came under scrutiny for its role in the rise of militant Islamism. Generally, scholarship on militant Islamism in Southeast Asia branched into two approaches: terrorism experts tended to see the problem through the prism of al-Qaeda, with Southeast Asian jihadists following orders from their leaders outside the region; Indonesia specialists, meanwhile, countered this al-Qaeda-centric approach by emphasising the local Indonesian factors driving Southeast Asian jihadism.

In this thesis, by contrast, I focus on the regional scale. I find that Southeast Asia, for a time, emerged as one of the most important places in the world for the mobilization of global jihadist attacks against the West due to a historical and geographical process unique to the region. Drawing on the emerging field of assemblage theory, I argue that over time a regional jihadist assemblage formed in Southeast Asia—a cross-border constellation of networks, groups, and material elements—and that it was the mobilization opportunities presented by this assemblage that made Southeast Asia so attractive to global jihadists. Analysing a wealth of original interview and documentary material, I trace the gradual development of this regional assemblage over time and space, from its origins in the cycles of conflict between jihadists and the state in Indonesia in the late 1940s to the crucial role played by Southeast Asians in the attacks of 9/11.
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GLOSSARY

Abu Sayyaf Group  Moro nationalist and jihadist group formed in 1991, based in the Sulu Archipelago, Southern Philippines

al-Qaeda  The Base; transnational jihadist organisation formed by Osama bin Laden in 1988

*amir* (emir)  chief or leader of an Islamic group

assemblage  heterogeneous and temporarily stable formation of various phenomena (actors, institutions, materials)

*bai’at*  oath of loyalty

*bid’ah*  heretical innovation

*dakwah* (da’wah)  proselytization, Islamic outreach

Darul Islam  Abode of Islam; Indonesia-based movement for an Islamic state

DDII  Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council)

*fardu ‘ayn*  a category of religious duty that must be performed by every Muslim

*fatwa*  formal opinion given by an Islamic scholar

GUPPI  Gabungan Usaha Perbaikan Pendidikan Islam (Islamic Education Advancement League)

Hadith  Report or account of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad transmitted through a chain of narrators

*hijrah*  literally “flight”; the migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina. Connotes temporary strategic withdrawal

*i’dad*  preparation; term used by jihadists to refer to military training

*imam*  leader of Muslim community or congregation

*jahiliyya*  “age of ignorance”; Arabic term referring to the pre-Islamic period

*jama’ah*  community, congregation

Jemaah Salafi  a group founded in the late 1990s in Southern Thailand by Muhammad Haji Jaeming

JI  Jemaah Islamiyah (Islamic Community); a transnational offshoot of Darul Islam, founded in Malaysia in 1993
**kafir**  non-believer (in Islam)

**KMM**  Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (Malaysian Mujahidin Group); a group formed in 1996 by Malaysian veterans of Afghanistan-Pakistan.

**Kopkamtib**  Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban (Command for the Restoration of Security and Order).

**MILF**  Moro Islamic Liberation Front; formed in 1978 in the Southern Philippines

**mujahidin**  holy warriors; those who engage in jihad

**New Order**  Suharto regime in Indonesia (1966-1998)

**NII**  Negara Islam Indonesia (Islamic State of Indonesia); state proclaimed by Darul Islam in Indonesia on August 7, 1949

**Opsus**  Operasi Khusus (Special Operations); Suharto-era Indonesian intelligence organization run by presidential advisor Ali Moertopo

**pesantren**  Islamic boarding school

**Salafism**  puritanical movement to return to the teachings and example of the early generations of Muslims

**sharia**  Islamic law

**ulama**  Islamic scholars

**umat**  Islamic community encompassing all Muslims

**usroh**  literally “family”; the term for a small study circle or organisational cell of the Muslim Brotherhood, adopted by Indonesian Muslim activists in the 1980s

**ustad**  Islamic teacher
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Archipelagic Southeast Asia

Global jihadists found Southeast Asia attractive due to its remoteness and the presence of a regional jihadist assemblage. Jemaah Islamiyah, the main organisation in the assemblage, was established in the Malacca hinterland, near the strategic and historical centre of the archipelago. (Google Earth & CartoGIS)
INTRODUCTION

The decade of the 2000s was one in which the long-held characterization of Southeast Asian Islam as “moderate” was challenged by the outbreak of religious conflict and acts of terrorism against civilians in the name of religion. In Indonesia, communal conflict between Muslims and Christians flared in 1999 in Ambon and in 2000 in Poso. In Thailand, an insurgency in the Muslim Malay south of the country developed in 2004 and continues its slow burn. In the Southern Philippines, the largest and longest-running separatist insurgency in the region dragged on, but was now overshadowed, from an international perspective, by the brutal kidnap-for-ransom schemes of the jihadist Abu Sayyaf Group. But the most unanticipated development was the emergence of the transnational militant Islamist organization, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). With a network spanning Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Australia, and with a presence in Pakistan, JI was the first truly transnational terrorist group in the region. Its coordinated bombings of night spots in Bali in 2002, claiming 202 lives and injuring many others, changed the Southeast Asian security outlook almost overnight. Although the US-led “War on Terror” and local counterterrorism operations subsequently degraded the capacity of Jemaah Islamiyah to conduct attacks across the region, the network from which the group had emerged continued to produce militants capable of mass-casualty violence. During this period, Indonesia, the most populous Muslim nation in the region, saw a series of dramatic terrorist bombings and often equally dramatic police operations to capture the perpetrators. Indicating the regularity of these events towards the end of the year, the term “bombing season” (musim bom) entered the Indonesian vernacular.

Although many aspects of Islamist militancy in Southeast Asia can be explained by local factors particular to individual conflicts, the Bali bombings suggested that the region had a new, much broader problem, which, following al-Qaeda’s attacks on the US on September 11, 2001, has been described as “global jihadism.” As a distinct ideology, jihadism is a violent form of Islamism that prioritizes armed jihad above peaceful forms of struggle in order to impose Islamic law and governance. Jihadists themselves use cognate terms to refer to their approach, such as the Arabic al-jihadiyya,
and the Arabic press regularly makes reference to them as an identifiable movement at the extreme fringe of Sunni Islam.¹ Although jihadists have historically prioritized attacks against local regimes they consider to be “apostate”, global jihadists, a relatively recent subset of the movement, promote attacks against the US and its allies, including civilians—enemies often characterized as Christian and Jewish crusaders against Islam—not just in recognized conflict zones, but anywhere in the world. This variant of jihadist ideology, innovated by Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda in the mid- to late 1990s, is evident in the Jemaah Islamiyah operative Imam Samudra’s “Istimata Declaration,” in which he claims responsibility for the 2002 Bali bombings:

Let it be acknowledged that every single drop of Muslim blood, be it from any nationality and from any place will be remembered and accounted for. Thousands of Muslims have perished, notably in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kashmir, Gujjarat and in various places on the Asian continent. Elsewhere in Europe, Muslims were mercilessly persecuted in Bosnia and Kosovo. While in Africa, Muslims were brutally killed in the Sudan. The heinous crime and international conspiracy of the Christians also extends to the Philippines and Indonesia. This has resulted in ‘Muslim cleansing’ in Moro [Southern Philippines], Poso, Ambon and surrounding areas [in Indonesia]. It is clearly evident the Crusade is continuing and will not stop…. We are responsible for the incident in Legian, Kuta, Bali.

Kuta, 12-10-02²

This thesis seeks to answer a number of puzzling questions about the emergence of global jihadism in Southeast Asia. Yet, rather than a detailed study of relatively recent ideational factors emerging from militant Islamist thinkers in the Middle East, I have approached the topic by way of a historically informed analysis of the slower moving and less noticed structural processes that changed Southeast Asian jihadism, beginning in Indonesia, over several decades. The diffusion of global jihadist ideology from abroad to Southeast Asia in the late 1990s is key to explaining events like the Bali bombings. During the course of my research, however, I came to the view that such diffusion is not the most interesting aspect of the problem. It is no great revelation that

around the turn of the century al-Qaeda ideology influenced militant Islamists in Southeast Asia, to a greater or lesser extent, to array themselves against Western targets, when the same process influenced militants across the world, from Chechnya to Kashmir.³

Considering global jihadism as it manifested in Southeast Asia, I was struck by two motivating questions. The first question arose from my earlier research on militant Islamism in Indonesia: why did a local Indonesian jihadist movement transform into a transnational movement, culminating in the rise of Jemaah Islamiyah?⁴ The second question, following from the first, came after discoveries I made during fieldwork in Malaysia about al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah operations in the region: why did Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaeda appear to enter into such close collaboration with one another, including in al-Qaeda’s most significant operation, the attack against the United States on September 11, 2001?

Although the spread of global jihadist ideology is an important part of the story, this thesis focuses on these central questions of movement transnationalization and jihadist collaboration. It does so through the framework of political geography, an approach that developed naturally from my observations in the field of how flexibly Southeast Asian jihadists adapt to spatial opportunities and constraints. Indeed, an underlying theme in this study is the way that jihadism in Southeast Asia has been structured over time by geography: that is, by factors such as territory, topography, borders and scale. Much of the narrative of this thesis describes how jihadists responded fluidly and opportunistically to the opportunities presented by a multiplicity of diverse geographical spaces across the region.

The geography of jihadism

Since September 11 there has been a growing literature on the geography of terrorism in general and jihadism in particular. Initially, in the aftermath of the attacks on New York and Washington, a US government-sponsored publication, The Geographical

⁴ Quinton Temby, “Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah,” Indonesia 89 (April 2010).
Dimensions Of Terrorism, sought to explore what professional geographers might contribute to solving the problem of terrorism.\(^5\) In line with this initiative, some geographers worked on ways in which Geographical Information Systems (GIS) might be deployed in support of counterterrorism policy.\(^6\) In counterpoint to these efforts, many in the discipline were wary of becoming entangled with government responses to 9/11 and, if concerned with terrorism at all, favoured critical geographical perspectives on US counterterrorism policies and the so-called “War on Terror”. Consequently, within the field of terrorism studies or, more particularly, within the multidisciplinary community of specialists working on militant Islamism, geographical approaches have remained rather marginal. Nevertheless, there is a growing body of literature that takes the spaces and places of post-9/11 terrorism and political violence seriously.

In Terror & Territory, Stuart Elden issues a critique of the War on Terror but also an argument against the notion that al-Qaeda represents somehow a “detrimentalized network”. He observes that the jihadist concepts of the “near enemy” (local secular regimes in the Muslim world) and the “far enemy” (the United States) suggests the importance of geography to contemporary jihadism. “The proximity of ‘near’ and ‘far’ enemies and the spatial politics of jihad,” he argues, “indicate the geographical and territorial aspects of al-Qaeda's operations.”\(^7\) Indeed, the militant pan-Islamist vision to reclaim lost Muslim lands in order to establish a Caliphate, articulated most powerfully by Abdullah Azzam during the insurgency against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s, is a deeply territorial vision and one that is a direct challenge to the contemporary system of sovereign nation-states.

In his chapter on the “Dynamic Metageographies of Terrorism,” Colin Flint argues that a geographical analysis can account for the multiple scales at which terrorists operate, noting that the latest wave of religiously inspired terrorism has transcended the nation-state, with the conflict posited as a universal cosmic war between good and evil. Thus,

\(^7\) Stuart Elden, Terror an Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty (Minnesota: Minesota University Press, 2009), 33.
“For the perpetrators, the motives are quite clear; they are just outside the paradigmatic boundaries of a social science that is still constrained by equating state with society.”

Flint is careful to maintain that states still constrain terrorist behavior. Yet it is US-led globalization, indeed “US hegemony”, which has led to a shift in scale from the national to the global. ‘Given that the flows of ‘globalization’ are part of the process of American hegemony, it is not surprising that religious terrorism utilizes and challenges these flows while at the same time negotiating the existing framework of sovereign states.’

The consequence of this is an asymmetry that Flint suggests is more problematic for states than for terrorists. He notes that, immediately after September 11, the war on terror began as a campaign to find and eliminate Osama bin Laden, the central node of a network. But soon the geographic focus of the war shifted to the Taliban regime, because it was harboring bin Laden, and then to the sovereign state of Afghanistan itself. Thus what began as a deterritorial, network-focused campaign ended in the traditional territorial politics of occupying space. It might be argued that only with the counterterrorism policies of the Obama administration, under which controversial cross-border operations, often utilizing drone technology, came to the fore, did the US fully adapt to the networked reality of its adversaries.

But there is a variety of different ways in which jihadists imagine territorial space. In “The Geographical Dimensions of al-Qaeda Rhetoric”, Joseph Hobbs argues that al-Qaeda is fundamentally territorial in that it seeks control of “sacred space”, that is, the holy cities of Mecca and Media. Hobbs highlights how al-Qaeda rhetoric divides the world into two perceived geographical spaces: Dar al-Islam, the House of Islam, and Dar al-Harb, the House of War, in which jihad must be waged to turn the area over to the forces of Islam. An appreciation of al-Qaeda’s “perceived space”, he argues, might help us to anticipate the location of terrorist attacks.

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9 Ibid., 209.
10 Ibid., 210.
In a similar vein, Kilot and Charney contribute to a line of geographical analysis demonstrating that, despite terrorism often being seen as having a “random quality,” certain terrorist activity does exhibit a distinct spatial pattern.\(^\text{12}\) A geospatial approach to charting terrorist behavior, drawing on both Geographical Information Systems and Social Network Analysis, has been championed most prominently by George Hepner and Richard Medina.\(^\text{13}\) Of course, many government defense and security agencies around the world specialize in such analysis, often under the rubric of “geospatial intelligence”, but, for obvious reasons, their work is classified and not available to the general public.

Perhaps the only previous study to apply an explicitly geographical framework to jihadism in Southeast Asia is found in the work of Justin V. Hastings, as part of his broader research on globalization and clandestine groups in the region. Hastings argues that, despite the age of globalization, clandestine groups like Jemaah Islamiyah find that when they are forced to operate in a world of hostile states, they are restricted by features of the physical landscape and topography. As Hastings puts it:

> Whenever it had the political openness to do so, JI behaved much like a small, multinational corporation, and benefited from the technologies and processes often associated with globalization: cheap plane trips, cell phone calls, e-mail, and generally lenient border controls. When increased hostility forced it to act more like the clandestine group that it was, those technologies and processes proved less helpful, and JI had to fall back on any geographic advantages, the presence or lack of which determined the success or failure of its attacks.\(^\text{14}\)

Such a nuanced analysis of the mobility of contemporary jihadists, one that qualifies notions of globalization and deterritorialization, echoes some of the work by other geographers in this space, most notably Elden, mentioned above. Indeed, the opportunities and constraints of geography in the global age is a central premise of this


\(^\text{13}\) See, for example, their overview of the field in Richard M. Medina & George F. Hepner, *The Geography of International Terrorism: An Introduction to Spaces and Places of Violent Non-State Groups* (Boca Raton: Taylor & Francis/CRC Press, 2013).

thesis. What unfolds in the following chapters is how jihadists in the region adapted over time to these constraints and opportunities, working with the often-meager resources and openings that were available, and how this process of adaptation, traced from the post-War 1940s, explains the transformation from local to global jihadism. My findings support the view that what might be considered aspects of globalization (increased cross-border exchange, faster communications) facilitated the emergence of global jihadism in the region. In this study, however, I pose a more significant proposition: that there was something unique about Southeast Asia as a region that made it central to the rise of global jihadism.

**Regional jihadism**

Although geographical approaches have been marginal in the literature on jihadism in Southeast Asia and beyond, the concept of scale has been highly influential. This influence is due to the broad ideological divide among jihadists since the rise of al-Qaeda between those who prioritize attacking what they call the “near enemy” (situated at the local, nation-state, scale) and those who, like al-Qaeda, prioritize the “far enemy” (situated at the global scale). The discourse on jihad thus arranged itself around the concepts of local and global jihad, with these terms coming to reflect more than just targeting priorities but also organizational scale and territorial reach.

This binary opposition of scales has had a profound effect on how the post-9/11 wave of jihadism in Southeast Asia has been interpreted by scholars and analysts alike, with a divide, paralleling the militants, between those researchers who prioritize the local scale of analysis and those who prioritize the global scale. Generally speaking, globalists argue that the best way to understand the rise of jihadism in Southeast Asia is to understand it as the consequence of al-Qaeda projecting its force into the region. Proponents of this hierarchical, al-Qaeda-centric approach include some of the most high-profile terrorism scholars in the field, such as Rohan Gunaratna, whose 2002 book *Inside al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, was an early primer for many alarmed observers. Gunaratna, however, was subsequently criticized for over-stating and under-substantiating the extent of al-Qaeda links with, let alone control of, many Islamist...
groups around the world, including in Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{15} Other terrorism scholars, such as Zachary Abuza in his \textit{Militant Islam in Southeast Asia}, limited the scope of their work to the regional scale, but also tended to adopt a globalist analysis, even if they brought more regional-level empirical detail to the argument. On the other side of the debate were analysts who approached Southeast Asian jihadism from a local, often country-specific, perspective. This approach drew heavily on the expertise of Indonesia scholars, with their detailed knowledge of national and local-level Muslim politics. Pioneered by Indonesia-based analysts Sidney Jones and Solahudin, this perspective emphasized the importance of local factors in driving jihadist recruitment and operations in the region, while serving as a critique of the globalist view that Southeast Asian jihadism emerged at the command and control of al-Qaeda. This localist framework was taken to its extreme by John Sidel, who argues that even jihadist attacks against Western targets in Indonesia are explicable in terms of local-level parliamentary politics.\textsuperscript{16}

In this thesis, in contrast to both the globalist and localist approaches, I give primacy to a regional scale of analysis. In emphasizing the regional scale, however, I do not mean to reject the existence of ideological differences between locally oriented versus globally oriented jihadists. Rather, I use \textit{regional} in a standard geographical sense to trace the historical transformation of a local Indonesian jihadist movement into a transnational, regionally based movement. I show that only by tracing this process of scale shift can we understand the emergence, at the turn of the last century, of Southeast Asia as an important space for global jihad.

By \textit{regional} I mean the supranational geography of Southeast Asia, as it came to be exploited by jihadists themselves, stretching from the Philippines in the north to Australia in the south, with a particular focus on the Muslim-majority countries at the centre of the region—Malaysia and Indonesia. The phenomenon of jihadism, I argue, is inevitably structured by the geographic spaces in which it occurs. Thus, a multiplicity of different Southeast Asian spaces features in this thesis. These include territorial spaces,

\textsuperscript{15} See, for example, Farish A. Noor, “Demonisation of Innocent Islamic Groups,” \textit{New Straits Times}, October 30, 2002.

borderlands, cosmopolitan cities, rural areas, and translocal spaces. One of Jemaah Islamiyah’s founding objectives according to its constitution, for instance, was to establish its own territory based on an assessment of an area’s geographic and demographic qualities.\textsuperscript{17} Such territory was conceived of as a safe base (\textit{qoidah aminah}), reflecting the Prophet’s term for the city of Madinah, to which he fled after leaving Mecca. The safe base would serve not just as a location for JI’s headquarters and leadership, but also as the first building block of an Islamic State. JI’s search for a safe base would go unfulfilled, but the dense jungle near Poso in Sulawesi has often featured in attempts to establish one due to its geographic isolation and impenetrable terrain. As senior JI figure Nasir Abbas has observed, some might say that peninsula Malaysia itself served as a safe base for the group, and indeed members avoided carrying out attacks there, preferring to strike in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{18} Borderlands, meanwhile, located at the margins of states where governance is weaker, presented opportunities to establish training facilities, as in the southern Philippines. The Malaysia-Indonesia-Philippines tri-border area at the edge of the Sulu Sea remains the key convergence space of Southeast Asian jihadism in that it connects militants from different countries and localities at both the transnational and the regional scale, facilitating multi-scalar mobilizations. Due to the localized failure of the Philippines state, the tri-border area is also the prime ungoverned space of Southeast Asia, with the Sulu Archipelago hosting Abu Sayyaf and MILF militants, as well as illicit weapons markets. The Philippines side of the tri-border area, crucially, is the only space in the region in which jihadists can claim de facto control of their own territory.

By applying a regional scale of analysis we might fully appreciate the significance of the fact that Jemaah Islamiyah, although led mostly by Indonesians, was founded not in Indonesia but in Malaysia. Its central command (\textit{markaziah}) was located, for its formative years until the late 1990s, in an outward-looking part of Malaysia I call the Malacca hinterland. Accordingly, those jihadists close to the centre, like the senior Malaysian JI figure, Wan Min Wan Mat, saw one of the group’s primary objectives as


\textsuperscript{18} Nasir Abas, \textit{Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah: Pengakuan Mantan Anggota JI} (Jakarta: Grafindo, 2005), 137.
the establishment of an Archipelagic Islamic State (Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara). Indeed, the last of the ten founding principles of Jemaah Islamiyah, according to its constitution, outlines a process of regional expansion, culminating in the establishment of a Caliphate.

Although global jihadists like to propagandize about their global reach, the reality rarely matches the rhetoric. Just as geographers have observed that economic globalization occurs within a high degree of regionalization, so they have observed the same for jihadism. As Karim Bahgat and Richard M. Medina illustrate in their survey of geographical perspectives on terrorism, mapping transnational terrorism reveals a pattern of “regional country-neighborhoods” or “regional hotspots,” of which Southeast Asia is just one. It is not a coincidence, then, that some of the best research on jihadism has focused on a particular region of conflict, such as the Caucuses, North Africa and the Sahel, and the cross-border Afghanistan-Pakistan region. The French scholar Jean-Pierre Filiu makes an explicit case for prioritizing the cross-border, regional aspects of jihadism in the Maghreb and elsewhere. Of course, in the case of certain groups, like “al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb,” the regional is embedded in the name.

**Regional jihadist assemblage**

In this thesis my main contribution to knowledge is twofold. First, drawing on original primary source material I demonstrate the historical–geographical process by which the seeds of local Indonesian jihadism spread to the region, culminating in the emergence of Southeast Asia’s first transnational jihadist organization, Jemaah Islamiyah. Second, drawing on original interview material and other sources, I explain the unique collaboration between Jemaah Islamiyah and al-Qaeda jihadists around the time of the attacks of September 11, a collaboration which came close to producing a Southeast

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19 Polisi Republik Indonesia, Berita Acara Pemeriksaan Wan Min bin Wan Mat, August 2, 2004, 10.
20 PUPJI.
Asian-based “second wave” attack to follow the operation on September 11. This thesis substantiates the extent of such collaboration, dramatically revising our understanding of the significance of Southeast Asia to the rise of global jihadism. I argue that due to its unique political geography, for a time Southeast Asia was the most important mobilization space for global jihad outside of Afghanistan-Pakistan.

Furthermore, I present a novel theoretical framework through which to understand the rise of global jihadism in Southeast Asia. In doing so, I draw from the emerging literature of assemblage theory to coin the term *regional jihadist assemblage*, which I define as a distributed and heterogeneous formation of jihadist actors and materials cross-cutting both organizational and territorial boundaries. I adopt the approach of what is sometimes called “assemblage thinking”, borrowing analytical tools and perspectives from the assemblage literature, often via the discipline of human geography, in which assemblage has been used to describe a heterogeneous collection of elements (people, institutions, resources) that combine to produce contingent and emergent relationships within a certain space, at a certain time.24

The concept of assemblage is compatible, but not interchangeable, with that of a network. In contrast to networks, assemblages encompass looser forms of emergent connectivity between elements that, taken as a whole, may transcend more than one social network. Thus actors in one social network may not be aware that they are connected to actors in another social network via a larger assemblage. By *regional assemblage*, in particular, I seek to capture not just one militant network (e.g., Indonesia’s Darul Islam network) but a larger formation for which there is otherwise no name but which might be described, somewhat awkwardly, as a loose social and material network of networks. In further contrast to the notion of a network, by assemblage I emphasise more than a networked set of relations that might be graphed according to the mathematical relationships between nodes and links. I emphasize relations that are very much located in, and shaped by, physical geographical space.

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That is to say, in this case, by the places, territories, landscapes and seascapes of Southeast Asia.

It is important to define my use of the term assemblage not least because, in the field of human geography, it is used in a number of different ways. You could say there is an assemblage of definitions. Nevertheless, my usage here captures a number of common elements. As Ben Anderson and Colin McFarlane put it in their recent survey of the concept, “there is no single ‘correct’ way to deploy the term.” Yet they observe that the term is often used to emphasize emergence, multiplicity and indeterminacy, and connects to a wider redefinition of the socio-spatial in terms of the composition of diverse elements into some form of provisional socio-spatial formation. To be more precise, assemblages are composed of heterogeneous elements that may be human and non-human, organic and inorganic, technical and natural. In broad terms, assemblage is, then, part of a more general reconstitution of the social that seeks to blur divisions of social–material, near–far and structure–agency.25

Assemblage is a concept that can be traced to the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and is a translation from the original French agencement.26 Agencement is a reminder that the term comes with a sense that it is not a static entity but an agency. As Martin Müller writes, “Assemblages are productive. They produce new territorial organizations, new behaviours, new expressions, new actors and new realities.”27 The term has a number of specialist uses in fields other than geography, in which it retains its sense of a heterogeneous collection of elements. For example, in ecology, where its precise usage has also varied, one suggested definition is “a taxonomically related group of species that occur together in space and time.”28 Similarly, in archaeology, the term generally refers to a collection of artefacts found at the same site at the same time. Here the term also retains its spatial and temporal senses, as it does in geography, as well as its sense that the nature of the relationship between elements is not pre-defined or fixed.

In recent scholarship, the traditional archaeological definition of assemblage has been seen as broadly compatible with, as well as giving concrete expression to, the more elaborate apparatus of assemblage thinking descended from philosophy and political theory.29

The first moves to elaborate a theory of assemblage were made by Manuel De Landa in his 2006 work *A New Philosophy of Society*.30 Applying the concept to a variety of entities (organizations, governments, cities) De Landa emphasizes the “relations of exteriority” between components in an assemblage, such that “a component part of an assemblage may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different.”31 Thus an assemblage has emergent properties in that the properties of the whole cannot be reduced to those of its parts. Among other applications, De Landa advances an assemblage analysis of social justice movements, drawing on the work of the eminent social movement theorist Charles Tilley. One of the implications of social movements as assemblages is that the whole is not just more than the sum of its parts but may even feature internal conflict between those parts, such as we sometimes see in the rivalry between social movement actors.32

In this thesis, I propose assemblage thinking as a productive new way to analyze jihadism, with a view to its potential to be applied to other similar militant phenomena for which the default concept has typically been that of a “network”. I posit that the militant or jihadist *assemblage*, which is limited spatially and temporally, is a more useful unit of analysis for understanding the rise of global jihadism in Southeast Asia than “network,” if by “network” we think of a form that is global and stable (Gunaratna’s “Global Network of Terror”), but also if by “network” we think of a unit of analysis that is “flat”—that is to say, a topological structure of nodes and connections removed from its historical and geographical context. This is not to take anything away from the field of social network analysis, where the application of network analysis


31 Ibid., 10.

32 Ibid., 59ff.
techniques to so-called “dark” (covert) networks has enriched our understanding of jihadism. But for the purpose of answering my central questions in this thesis, I argue that only at the spatial-temporal scale of the assemblage can we understand the historical collaboration between “global” and “local” jihadists in Southeast Asia. Finally, an assemblage approach entails thick description of the phenomena under examination. Assemblages, as De Landa elaborates, following Deleuze, are found on a spatial continuum between the territorialized and the deterritorialized. Thus the networked relations between actors, locations, targets and weapons, in this analysis, are fleshed out by the geographical spaces and topographical landscapes of the region.

I argue that it was the opportunity to exploit the resources of a historically formed Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage, characterized by recurrent interactions between transnationally mobile jihadists and the infrastructure, landscapes and territories of the region, that drew al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah militants into close collaboration in the 2000s, causing the geographically peripheral region of Southeast Asia to become central to the mobilization of global jihadism, second in importance only to Afghanistan-Pakistan. Global jihadist entrepreneurs and organizers mobilized resources from across the regional assemblage, defying organizational and territorial boundaries, in order to conduct attacks against Western targets. By accessing the regional assemblage, jihadists took advantage of geographical differences in the distribution of resources across Southeast Asia. By aggregating such resources, jihadists compensated for resource scarcity in individual locations. The invisible but very real mobilization possibilities of the regional jihadist assemblage explain why Southeast Asia played such a key role in the attacks of September 11, and a central role in follow-up operations such as the aborted “second wave” attacks. It is the same reason why, when much of the world was preoccupied with the spectre of the Y2K computer bug, jihadists from Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia could contemplate collaborating in a strike against the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Furthermore, a regional jihadist assemblage resolves one nagging tension between the
globalist and localist perspectives on jihadism in Southeast Asia. My framework accepts
the localist argument that al-Qaeda’s global jihadism was only ever a fringe ideology
among jihadists in the region, who largely prioritized local targets, especially those who
had not ventured much beyond Indonesia. Indeed, this view from Southeast Asia is
consistent with the view from other parts of the jihadist universe. As Vahid Brown
argues in his study of primary source materials on al-Qaeda and its relations with “peer
organizations,” “on balance, al-Qa’ida’s quest for influence has been in vain, and the
scope of that influence has been greatly exaggerated.” As Brown summarizes it, in
effect, al-Qaeda asks local jihadists to abandon their local agendas “in favour of its
vision of globalized civilizational conflict, while couching such appeals in a framework
of religious justifications that depart radically from traditional Islamic understandings of
jihad.” But, he concludes, although al-Qaeda converted many to its cause, it was
largely unsuccessful in its appeal, rendering the organization, “a marginal actor in the
larger drama of international Islamist militancy.”

According to a regional assemblage approach, however, not only did global jihadists not
convert the majority of jihadists in Southeast Asia to their cause, they had no need to.
Global jihadist entrepreneurs and activists were able to advance their agenda by
“plugging into” an assemblage of actors, weapons, infrastructure, territories, and other
elements in order to plan or execute attacks in the region and beyond. By mobilizing
resources from across the assemblage, this collection of heterogeneous elements held
together by recurrent interactions, global jihadists did not require a monolithic jihadist
community with a uniform ideology in order to achieve at least some of their aims—to
sometimes devastating effect. And so, an act such as the 2002 Bali Bombings is
explicable as a product of the jihadist assemblage in that key figures in the attack,
including the Sari Club suicide bomber Arnasan, were local followers of Indonesia’s
Darul Islam movement, to which Arnasan, in point of fact, dedicated his sacrifice. Similarly, certain figures key to the emergence to global jihadism in the region, such as the 2002 Bali field commander Imam Samudra and the 9/11 planner Khalid Sheik

36 Vahid Brown, “Classical and Global Jihad: Al-Qa’ida’s Franchising Frustrations,” in Fault Lines in
37 Temby, “Imagining an Islamic State,” 1.
Muhammad, were free agents within the assemblage more than formal members of Jemaah Islamiyah or al-Qaeda. As we shall see, an assemblage approach that assumes a loose heterogeneity of components accounts for the fact that even non-violent actors could be coopted into the regional assemblage.

Indeed, there is a much lower threshold for being considered part of an assemblage than there is for a network, especially a “terrorist network” as it is conventionally imagined. Thus although the terms global jihad and terrorism in Southeast Asia evoke the name Jemaah Islamiyah more than any other, to be precise, all major jihadist attacks in Southeast Asia can be said to be the work not of Jemaah Islamiyah, but rather of ad hoc cells or teams of jihadists drawn from a regional assemblage of which JI was but one component part. Global jihadist organizers were successful in mobilizing such teams, despite the fact that many jihadists within the assemblage were critical of the attacks or might have opposed them in other ways.

I have used the term “Southeast Asia” in this thesis to label the supranational cluster of interactions that I am calling a regional assemblage in the knowledge that a region by that name is a relatively recent construct, one that came to prominence only after it became an important theatre of war for the Allies against the Japanese in World War Two.38 Thus I use the term in a loose sense of a relational clustering of activity as opposed to a distinct geographical region in any fixed sense. As a relational construct, from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, the regional assemblage encompassed spaces not conventionally considered Southeast Asia, such as Australia, where several key Jemaah Islamiyah operatives were located. It also had components in Pakistan; for example, the al-Ghuraba group, a grouping of the sons and younger brothers of senior Jemaah Islamiyah figures who were sent for religious training in Karachi. And the assemblage featured operatives located mostly outside territorial Southeast Asia. For example, the 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Muhammad was connected to the assemblage through the al-Ghuraba group, but also through historical interpersonal interactions.

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The regional assemblage, however, was not merely relational. It was also territorial in an indeterminate and amorphous sense, influenced by a historically rooted sense of maritime Southeast Asia as a coherent space composed of the islands and littoral zones of Southeast Asia, which have long been connected by trade, commerce and the Malay language. The notion of such a space is captured in the Indonesian-Malaysian term of Javanese and Sanskrit derivation, nusantara—literally, “islands in between”, or, as it is usually translated, “archipelago.” A sense of shared maritime geography in this part of the world, as Anthony Reid has shown, can be traced as far back as the 13th century, prior to European colonization, when the islands, peninsulas and waterways of Southeast Asia first became linked by a pattern of intraregional exchange. “Maritime intercourse,” Reid concludes, “continued to link the peoples of Southeast Asia more tightly to one another than to outside influences down to the seventeenth century”. Consequently, Jennifer L. Gaynor observes, “It has often been said that the seas in Southeast Asia, rather than an obstacle or hindrance, are a unifying factor for the peoples who live along the region’s rivers and coasts.” In their meditations on the Indonesian archipelago, Robert Cribb and Michele Ford also note the internally linked “natural unity” of archipelagos. “The fact that, once one can get off an island and aboard a vessel,” they write, “the sea offers the possibility of travel in almost any direction has a distinctly centrifugal effect.”

The very topography of the region, then—a vast archipelago within a seascape—is one that facilitates jihadist mobility and border transgression, just as it has connected the peoples of the region for centuries. An evolving regional consciousness among Southeast Asian jihadists can be roughly charted according to the deterritorializing and

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39 In his research on the Tibetan solidarity social movement, Andrew D. Davies argues it is precisely the concept of assemblage, with its flexibility to capture characteristics of both fixity and fluidity, that can reconcile the tension in geography between spatial notions of a fluid relational network versus a fixed territorial area. See Andrew D. Davies, “Assemblage and Social Movements: Tibet Support Groups and the Spatialities of Political Organisation,” Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 37, no. 2 (2012): 283.


reterritorializing of their political imaginaries over the span of recent decades. Shifts in nomenclature indicate a course from Darul Islam’s highly territorialized Indonesian Islamic State (*negara*), to Jemaah Islamiyah’s deterritorialized community (*jemaah*) bound only by Islam, to regional jihadists’ Archipelagic Islamic State (*nusantara*), centred on the Malay world, but fanning out across maritime Southeast Asia. Most recently, the vision of an Archipelagic Islamic State has been adopted by Indonesians and Malaysians fighting for ISIS in Syria as members of the insurgency’s Malay-speaking unit, known as Katibah Nusantara.43

Highland areas of mainland Southeast Asia, in Vietnam and Laos for example, seem not to feature in the imagination, meanwhile other mainland areas with Muslim populations, such as southern Thailand and certain parts of Burma and Cambodia, historically the location of independent sultanates, do. Thus the assemblage is shaped not just by notions of *nusantara* but, also, by visions of pan-Islamism which seek to embrace disparate Muslim communities. In the tradition of the seminal jihadist ideologue of the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, Abdullah Azzam, areas such as these can be cast as “Muslim territory” that must be united under Muslim rule.

From the perspective of explaining the emergence of global jihadism in Southeast Asia, one of the most striking aspects of the Southeast Asian assemblage is not so much its territory, but, rather, the vast spaces surrounding it. In other words, Southeast Asia’s isolation at the periphery of the Muslim world. Such distance from the centers of power in Islam makes Southeast Asia a unique place for a variety of expressions of Islam, militant Islamism being just one of these. As Robert Hefner has shown, Indonesian religious scholars have pioneered tolerant and pluralistic readings of the faith, making them world leaders in Islamic renewal and reform.44 Yet the theory of distance decay raises a problem in explaining the intensity of the global jihadist collaboration in Southeast Asia. Distance decay posits that, as a result of the costs involved in bridging time and distance, geographical processes lose force with distance from a central point. For example, Yasutaka Tominaga uses a Geographical Information Systems approach to

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show that that *proximity* predicts the diffusion of terrorist suicide attacks, positing that terrorists learn from adjacent geographical areas, which have similar conditions, as to whether such a tactic is likely to be effective. According to distance decay, the great distance between jihadists in Southeast Asia and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan-Pakistan should have reduced the probability of Southeast Asians adopting suicide tactics, yet it did not. Tominaga hypothesizes, quite validly it seems, that the *density* of the Jemaah Islamiyah-al-Qaeda network, built over a period of decades, might have compensated for the tyranny of distance.\(^{45}\) Indeed, a dense, historically informed and geographically based network would be another way of describing the regional jihadist assemblage.

As far as its geographical location is concerned, although Southeast Asian Islam is peripheral, it is far from marginal. With some 240 million adherents, there are more Muslims in Southeast Asia than in the Arab world. Post-9/11 warnings that Southeast Asia had emerged as a “second front” in the war on terrorism were alarmist and misplaced. But if not a front, then perhaps a *frontier*, in the sense of a zone at the border or periphery. In the literature on borderlands, borders are sometimes seen as having hard edges but border zones as possessing what Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers describe as a “tendency towards transgression”.\(^{46}\) This is especially true for borders of states in which the rule of law is weak. Thus, for global jihadists, Southeast Asia was appealing precisely because it is peripheral, akin to a border zone, and thus isolated from the high-profile conflicts and major-power scrutiny present in the Middle East, closer to the centre of the Muslim world.

Finally, this thesis argues that it was the unique geography of Southeast Asia that made it a central *mobilization space* in the rise of global jihadism. Geopolitically peripheral but globally networked, cosmopolitan but home to a growing and undetected assemblage of regional jihadists, Southeast Asia was an ideal staging ground for large-scale international terrorism. It was also the last place that the authorities would be looking. Even today it might come as a surprise to some to learn that the 9/11 plot was

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conceived not in a dusky cave in Afghanistan but in the rapidly industrializing and globalizing cities of Manila and Kuala Lumpur of the mid-1990s. It was in the Philippines that Ramzi Yousef, the archetypal global jihadist, first plotted to turn hijacked planes into missiles, having established himself in the region in order to avoid capture by the US authorities who he believed were searching for him in Pakistan following his execution of the first World Trade Center attack in 1993. It was during this time that global jihadists like Yousef and his uncle, future 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, learnt that by working in with Southeast Asian jihadists they could acquire an ability to operate across the entire region.

According to assemblage theory, assemblages may be conceptualized at different scales. De Landa’s ontology sees the world ordered by assemblages everywhere, nested in sets at a multiplicity of scales—for example, the body, the city, the state. In this thesis, however, I restrict my analysis to the regional scale of Southeast Asia, where we otherwise do not have a term to describe the network of networks in which diverse jihadist actors, often with different priorities, interact across borders in complex ways that call to mind certain familiar tropes, such as the kaleidoscope. Yet Southeast Asian jihadists, taken together with their jihadist counterparts elsewhere in the world, can be considered part of a larger global assemblage of jihadists that formed around the experience of the jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980s. In a fundamentally relational world, assemblages are connected to other assemblages at equal, higher, or lower scales. At the higher scale, Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier have developed the concept of the global assemblage to analyze practices as diverse as stem cell research and international governance systems. Indeed, global assemblage may be preferable to the term commonly used to describe the community that emerged from the Afghanistan experience, “Arab Afghans,” a term that utterly fails to include Southeast Asians.

Towards the end of this thesis I address the period, identified with the US-led global war on terror, in which the Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage was disrupted by both global and local counterterrorism measures. Consideration of this period is important

for understanding the point that assemblages are not just spatial but temporal. Assemblages may go through a process in which elements gather and cohere, then, as the assemblage weakens, disperse.  

Since the so-called war on terror, jihadism in Southeast Asia has been marked more than ever by fragmentation, the interplay of various actors, groups and organizations morphing from year to year, if not from operation to operation. As Kit Collier observed in 2006 by way of a critique of al-Qaeda-centric models of Southeast Asian jihadism, jihadism in the region is characterized by “a fluid pattern of alignment and realignment between autonomous jihadi factions.” “What knits these factions loosely together,” writes Collier, “[is] a shared world-view based on personal allegiances forged in exile, training camps on the Afghan border, or the conflict zones of Sulawesi, Maluku, and—looking forward—Mindanao.”

In the harsher security climate of these years global jihadists found themselves more geographically restricted and less regionally mobile as parts of the regional assemblage disassembled or went into abeyance. I characterize this more circumscribed mobilization space as translocal. In the geographical literature, translocality is a way of conceptualizing both the mobility of actors across space and their fixity in local places. Katherine Brickell and Ayona Datta thus describe translocality as “simultaneous situatedness across different locales” and “‘groundedness’ during movement.” For the period following the 2002 Bali bombing especially, I use the term translocal jihad to characterize the nature of jihadist mobilization in Southeast Asia. At this time jihadists were capable of mobilizing cross-border attacks inspired by aspects of global jihadism, but, as a result of security pressures restricting their movements, they were no longer able to act extensively at the regional scale.

Scope, limitations and structure of the thesis

This thesis has been shaped by many boundaries. Rather than presenting a comprehensive historical account of jihadism in Southeast Asia, I narrow my focus to those aspects that explain my central questions regarding jihadist regionalization and global jihadist collaboration. This necessarily excludes many avenues of inquiry that are key to other questions regarding Southeast Asian jihadism. For example, I do not consider the crucial role of kinship networks and networks of jihadist-affiliated religious schools and mosques that are so important to questions of recruitment and social network endurance. Similarly, I do not look in great detail at individual agency, except in one case of charismatic leadership in which I consider the unique contribution of Jemaah Islamiyah founder Abdullah Sungkar. Finally, although I accept ideology, specifically global jihadist ideology, as a necessary causal factor in jihadism, I treat it as an a priori assumption and do not enter into any close analysis of the role of ideation in Southeast Asian jihadism.

Other limitations of this thesis arose from the nature of the subject itself. The study of jihadism entails severe restrictions on who one can access to interview and what documentary material is available. Jihadists, as largely clandestine actors, seek to restrict and manipulate access to information about their actions. Due to secrecy and compartmentalization within jihadist groups, even the actors themselves are beset by problems of imperfect information. Thus the researcher must make do with fragmentary and sometimes contradictory sets of empirical data and accept that it is not possible to resolve every confusion or gap in the historical record.

Often in this thesis I have used historical records that have emerged from unclear or questionable circumstances: court transcripts produced by a politicied legal system, interrogation transcripts by authorities implicated in abuse of detainees, literature from militants who are propagandists for their cause. My approach to these problems has been to analyse the data as forensically as possible, always seeking not just to crosscheck claims against multiple sources but also to actively look for disconfirmatory evidence. Where sources contradicted each other, as they sometimes did, I sought to arrive at conclusions based on the preponderance of evidence while indicating the possibility of alternative conclusions.
The structure of the thesis is set out as follows. Following this introduction, in Chapter 2 I trace the historical roots of the Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage from its origins in Indonesia’s local Darul Islam movement. I observe the territorial fixity of the movement in order to chart its subsequent military defeat, deterritorialization and then later reterritorialization at the regional scale over the following chapters. In Chapter 3 I account for the revival of Darul Islam as a clandestine movement under President Suharto’s New Order regime. I demonstrate how jihadists during this period attempted to mount attacks against the state but were comprehensively defeated by regime repression. This account of effective regime repression continues in Chapter 4, but is met with an analysis of the charismatic leadership of Jemaah Islamiyah founder Abdullah Sungkar, who deterritorialized Indonesian jihadist thought, aligning it with jihadist ideas emerging from the Middle East before it had even left its national confines. In Chapter 5, we see how, due to a combination of repression in Indonesia and new leadership in the form of Abdullah Sungar, Indonesian jihadism diffused to neighboring Malaysia, marking the origins of a process of transnationalization that culminated in regional assemblage. Chapter 6 traces the emergence of a regional jihadist assemblage from its origins in the transnational space of Malaysia. We then see how very early in the history of global jihadism, in the mid-1990s, foreign jihadists tapped into the Southeast Asian assemblage. Chapter 7 illustrates how global jihadists mobilized the Southeast Asian assemblage, including in the attacks of September 11. Chapter 8 analyzes global jihadist mobilization in the decade following 9/11 under the rubric of translocal jihad, in the context of the weakening of the regional assemblage. Finally, in the conclusion, I summarize my findings, elicit some of their implications, and consider future directions for research in the geography of jihadism.
The greatest jihad Southeast Asia has ever seen was the jihad to end Dutch colonial rule and establish the newly proclaimed Republic of Indonesia. Indonesia’s independence marked, among many other things, the end to more than half a century of often brutal Dutch efforts to neutralise the perceived threat of political Islam. Similar to elsewhere in the post-colonial world, Indonesia’s new leaders, like Soekarno and Muhammad Hatta, were primarily secular-leaning nationalists, whose vision was to create a religiously neutral republic. Despite this goal, a large section of the independence movement hoped to see Indonesia, with its overwhelming Muslim majority, eventually become a state based on Islam. During Indonesia’s war of independence, from 1945-1949, politicians from Islamic parties agreed to strategically postpone this goal for the sake of unity against the Dutch, all the while maintaining an aspiration to convert the republic to an Islamic State by constitutional means as soon as the republic was safe. At the same time, at the grassroots level especially, many Muslim independence fighters saw their struggle through the prism of jihad. Local Islamic leaders, too, mobilized their followers with battle cries against infidel Christian Dutch colonisers.

At the national level, Masyumi, the Muslim umbrella organisation-cum-political party, from its founding in 1945, conceived of the independence struggle as a jihad in the way of God (jihad fisabilillah). The East Java branch of Nadhlatul Ulama, the preeminent traditionalist Islamic organisation, issued a fatwa on October 22, 1945, on the eve of one of the revolution’s decisive moments, the Battle of Surabaya, which declared that opposition to Dutch efforts to recolonise Indonesia was a requirement of its members. The fatwa declared:

This requirement is a “jihad” that becomes mandatory for every Muslim (fardlu 'ain) who is within a radius of 95 Km, (that is, the distance within


54 For an account of this perspective, see Kevin William Fogg, “The Fate of Muslim Nationalism in Independent Indonesia” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2012).
which a Muslim can pray congregational prayers and travelers’ prayers). Those who are outside of the defined radius are obligated to help those brothers who are within the aforementioned 94 Km radius.\footnote{Fogg, “Fate of Muslim Nationalism,” 164.}

The Battle of Surabaya itself was an important zone of jihad for many Indonesian fighters whose ranks were fortified by an irregular Muslim militia, Hizbullah, on the ground and by the cries of Allahu Akbar in the air. Indeed, all over the archipelago, religious scholars mobilized support for the independence fight by employing the rhetoric of jihad, in which the Dutch were cast as infidel, Christian oppressors. Thus it was the Dutch, who had sought to encourage cultural Islam while suppressing political Islam in their colony, who unintentionally did the most to revive Islam as a framework of political mobilization by refusing to accept that the age of colonization had come to an end. Such was the popularity of jihadist rhetoric that on October 17, 1945, the devout Muslim but secular nationalist Muhammad Hatta issued a government declaration prohibiting the declaring of holy war by any individual.\footnote{Ibid., 166.} The language of jihad, as he and other leaders were aware, was not likely to play well before the international community whose diplomatic support Indonesia sought in its dispute with the Netherlands.

Although the question of the role of Islam in the state, by general consensus, had been postponed amid the crisis of war, Harun Nasution observes that as the fight against the Dutch dragged on, those in the independence movement who envisioned Indonesia as an Islamic State divided into broadly two wings. Nasution refers to the largest section as the “constitutional” wing of the movement, which sought to transform Indonesia into an Islamic state through a legal process by which the country would write Islamic law into a new constitution, which was set to replace the constitution of 1945, the latter having been adopted as a provisional document immediately after the declaration of independence. But towards the end of the 1940s, a smaller “revolutionary” wing of the movement began to lose patience with the secular nationalists and to agitate for an Islamic State by any means necessary.\footnote{Nasution, “Islamic State in Indonesia,” 91.} It is from this historical moment that we can trace the origins of Indonesian jihadism that would culminate in the emergence of Darul
Islam, a splinter from the Indonesian revolution that fought to replace the Republic with its own “Islamic State of Indonesia.”

Rebellious child of the revolution

Just as the Indonesian revolution rose from the ashes of World War Two, Darul Islam, Indonesia’s seminal radical Islamist movement, was forged in the bitter struggle to prevent the Dutch from re-colonising the country. First emerging in West Java in the late 1940s under the leadership of the Muslim nationalist Sekarmaji Marijan Kartosoewirjo, Darul Islam is one of the oldest militant Islamist movements in the world. As a movement opposing both Western colonialism and post-colonial secular nationalism, it predates by at least a decade the more well-known Islamist movement that emerged in Egypt in the mid- to late 1950s out of the Muslim Brotherhood, in opposition to the secular nationalist regime of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser. That militant movement, which spread to Saudi Arabia and fused with that country’s puritanism, becoming identified by the term salafi jihadism, shared with Darul Islam a desire to emulate the prophet Muhammad’s flight from oppression, his establishment of the first Islamic polity in Madina in 622 AD, and his defense of that community through jihad. But Darul Islam, a child of the Indonesian revolution and rooted in local traditions, differed from Middle Eastern salafi jihadism in important respects. Darul Islam echoed Indonesia’s long tradition of rural millenarianism and thus emerged with a strong association with the particular agrarian territories in which it rose up as a rebellion, first in West Java, but also in Aceh, Sulawesi and East Kalimantan. During the course of the revolution, however, Darul Islam’s sense of territory became grafted onto the republic’s. Thus it was not a separatist movement, but one that stood to convert the republican territorial state into an Islamic State.

The political journey of its leader, S.M. Kartosoewirjo, from Indonesian nationalist to Islamic revolutionary, offers much to explain the origins of the Darul Islam movement. By contemporary standards, Kartosoewirjo is an unlikely jihadi icon. The son of a well-to-do opium trader in Central Java, he was educated in the Dutch school system that

\[\text{58 Parts of this chapter discussing Darul Islam’s revolutionary roots draw on historical research conducted for my Honours thesis and published in Quinton Temby, “Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah,” Indonesia 89 (April 2010).}
\[\text{59 Jarret M. Brachman, Global Jihadism: theory and practice (London: Routledge, 2008), 24-25.}

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was designated primarily for European or Eurasian children expected to achieve respected professional employment as doctors, lawyers or civil servants. In 1923, at the age of eighteen, he attended the Netherlands Indies Medical School (NIAS) in Surabaya which trained “Javanese doctors” (Dokter Jawa), a native class of physicians considered a level beneath their Dutch counterparts. But he never finished medical school, having been expelled for political reasons. One account has it that Kartosoewirjo had come under the influence of his uncle, Marco Kartodikromo, a communist and member of the “red” faction of the Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union). According to an early biography of Kartosoewirjo by Indonesian historian Pinardi, Kartosoewirjo had been caught on campus with communist literature. In 1927 he lived in the city of Surabaya, which had emerged as a hotbed of the nationalist movement, and such environs likely played a part in his radicalization against the Dutch. Indonesia’s future founding father, Soekarno, whom Kartosoewirjo came to know through their mutual mentor, the Muslim nationalist H.O.S Tjokroaminoto, had lived in Surabaya from 1916 to 1921; although he may have the year wrong, Soekarno recounted in his autobiography with Cindy Adams that “in 1918 Kartosuwiryo was a dear friend. We worked side by side with Tjokro [Tjokroaminoto] for our country.”

Kartosoewirjo’s formal education, therefore, had exposed him to Dutch language and European thought. Conspicuously absent, however, was any training in Arabic language or Islamic scripture. It was only after his expulsion from medical school that he began to be influenced by Islamic politics under the mentorship of the founder of Sarekat Islam, H.O.S Tjokroaminoto, with whom he boarded and whose personal friend he became. Founded as a union to protect the economic interests of native Muslim traders against the Chinese, Sarekat Islam was an early manifestation of Indonesian nationalism. Tjokroaminoto’s success was in fusing socialism and Islam into a unifying ideology that would be inherited by his other protégé, Soekarno and under his presidency eventually become the state ideology known as NASAKOM, an Indonesian contraction of Nationalism, Religion and Communism. If Kartosoewirjo was influenced by his mentor’s sympathy for socialism, it did not last long. But he does appear to have

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inherited another of his mentor’s qualities: Tjokroaminoto had a proclivity to exploit in his followers what Van Der Kroef terms “messianic expectations.” Early Indonesian nationalist groups like Sarekat Islam, Kroef writes, “could include in their program among the Javanese the promise that the Ratu Adil was about to return….”62 The Ratu Adil, or Just King, a messianic figure from Javanese cosmology, is prophesised to return after a period of hardship, bringing prosperity to the people. Later, Kartosoewirjo, like Tjokroaminoto before him, was not above letting his followers believe that he himself was the messiah, allowing Darul Islam to tap into a rich tradition of mobilizing peasants in millenarian revolt.

In 1928 Kartosoewirjo became active in the Sarekat Islam party and a frequent contributor to its newspaper, *Fadjar Asia*. By this time, however, he appears to have been following the lead of Hadji Agoes Salim, a rival to Tjokroaminoto, who championed the Islamization of Sarekat Islam’s policies, invoked notions of pan-Islamism, and addressed the debate over the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate, which had occurred in 1924 with the founding of modern Turkey. Tellingly, at this time Kartosoewirjo was an intemperate commentator in print, oftentimes just as scathing of the failings of his fellow revolutionaries as he was of the Dutch.63 Indeed, his polemics had brought him to the attention of the Dutch authorities who described him as “anti-European” and marked by “religious fanaticism”.64

In 1928 Kartosoewirjo joined in taking the Youth Pledge (Sumpah Pemuda) at a historic event in the annals of Indonesian nationalism, the second national youth congress, held in Batavia (present-day Jakarta). Kartosoewirjo himself addressed the congress, arguing, as did others, for Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) to become the national language. By Tjokroaminoto’s death in 1934 Kartosoewirjo was a leader in his mentor’s Indonesian Islamic Union Party (Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia). By August 17, 1945, when Soekarno and Muhammad Hatta proclaimed Indonesia’s independence, Kartosoewirjo was a prominent nationalist in his own right. Despite credentials that

were more revolutionary nationalist than Islamic, he advocated an Islamic state by democratic means, in line with the consensus among Muslim nationalists, represented by the Masyumi party, of which he became First Secretary. Yet, like his Masyumi colleagues, he supported the creation of the Republic. For this reason, perhaps counterintuitively, he and Islamists like him in Masyumi did not protest the eleventh hour dropping of the Jakarta Charter, a preamble to the 1945 constitution which included a line that would have required Muslims to follow Islamic law.

Such was Kartosoewirjo’s standing in nationalist politics that in 1947 he was offered a cabinet position, albeit a junior one, of Second Vice-Minister for Defence in the Republican administration of Amir Sjarifuddin. But Masyumi politicians, including Kartosoewirjo, rejected offers to join what they considered a “leftist” cabinet. Kartosoewirjo, meanwhile, chose to focus on his role within Masyumi, in which he was tasked to coordinate the campaign against the Dutch, who in July had occupied the key region of West Java in their first “Police Action.” There the nationalist resistance would be spearheaded by the Masyumi guerrilla units, Hizbullah and Sabilillah.

Kartosoewirjo’s decision to help lead the fight in West Java rather than join the cabinet might be seen as a decisive moment along his path of “radicalisation.” But at the time he was far from alone in appearing to be driven towards political Islam as a result of Dutch aggression. The Islamization of the independence movement was most apparent in Masyumi, which called for jihad against the Dutch and the formation, through parliamentary procedures, of an Islamic state, dar al-Islam. As Formichi writes, “Masyumi’s dedication to establishing an independent Islamic state was constantly emphasised in the pages of its bulletin al-Djihad.” But even the more moderate Nahdlatul Ulama had made a “jihad resolution” at its congress in March 1946 that it was an individual religious duty for Muslims living near or in Dutch occupied areas to fight the European enemy. As Kevin Fogg observes, “For a brief window at the beginning of the revolution, the rhetoric of jihad and Islamic struggle seemed

65 Nasution notes that the Islamists were also disorganized at the time of the proclamation and so could only exert limited influence on the proceedings. Nasution, “Islamic State in Indonesia,” 68.
66 Formichi, Islam and the making, 97.
67 Ibid., 87.
68 Ibid., 86.
ubiquitous in Indonesia. Even the left-leaning paper *Merdeka* in Jakarta employed the rhetoric of *jihad fi sabilillah.*

For the time being, however, Kartosoewirjo remained faithful to the cause of Indonesian unity against the Dutch, with the democratic establishment of an Islamic state to come later. Indeed, his political pragmatism on this point was a matter of public record. His *Course of Political Islam* (*Haloean Politik Islam*), a speech given in Garut in 1946 and published by Masyumi’s regional information office, had made the case for a constitutional Islamic State and envisioned a coming “Islamic revolution.” His emphasis, however, was very much on nationalism rather than Islamism. Kartosoewirjo argued that the *Revolusi Nasional* should be prioritised over the *Revolusi Islam*:

> We are sure, in all certainty, that there is not a place or sector or area of life for any ideology unless our Country is truly 100 per cent independent…. Because of this, whether they like it or not, every citizen must be obliged to help finish the Revolusi Nasional, fight all the occupying efforts of Imperialism wherever they are.

Once the revolution had been achieved, according to Kartosoewirjo, the gradual process of establishing a “Dar-oel-Islam” could be begun, meaning the application of Islamic law, starting with the individual. “If that strength is expanded, it’s enough for one neighbourhood or one village, thus to build up Dar-oel-Islam in that neighbourhood or village.” Furthermore, in accordance with official Masyumi policy, he declared the national revolution a *jihad fi-sabilillah* and an individual duty for all Muslims:

> Every Muslim must be sure that it is an individual duty that compels and pushes them to participate in rejecting colonisation, and to perform jihad in the way of God, conventional warfare, or battle, with heart and soul, and whatever else is required to be sacrificed on the path that is holy.

Kartoesoewirjo’s appeal for unity notwithstanding, in the same year—even before the Dutch invasion to retake Java in 1947—Islamic militias in West Java clashed with

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69 Fogg, “Fate of Muslim Nationalism,” 165.
71 Ibid., 40.
72 Ibid.
Republican troops. In an early reminder that the militias were not under Republican control, in March 1946, after General Nasution was forced to abandon Bandung when it was attacked by the British who were tasked with returning the Netherlands Indies from Japanese to Dutch control on behalf of the Allies, he remarked that he had abided by the British demand to retreat but that he “could not be responsible for extremist elements.” Nasution was referring to the troops of the Hizbullah, Sabilillah and Pesindo militias, which had refused to be incorporated into the Republican army. Already, the militias, a precursor to Darul Islam, were being treated by the Republicans as a hostile force. Formichi observes that, “On many occasions, retreating TNI soldiers refused to hand their weapons over to Masyumi troops, preferring instead to destroy them as a precaution, since Islamic militias were being treated as enemies.”

The Linggadjati Agreement of November 1946, signed by the Netherlands and the Republic, further deepened the tensions within the independence movement. Linggadjati was a compromise with the Dutch in which Republican-held territories were federated under the United States of Indonesia, with the Dutch Queen as head of state. In response, Masyumi hardened its rhetoric against what it saw as the accommodationist stance of the Republican government, with Masyumi leaders Wahid Hasjim, Soekiman and Zainal Arifin writing to members in al-Djihad that they would “bring down the Indonesian government with arms.”

But Masyumi itself was split. According to Sjafruddin Prawiranegara there was, as Kevin Fogg relates it,

a basic division in the Masjumi between Western-educated members, who generally favored Linggarjati (and other subsequent negotiated agreements with the Dutch), and the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) educated old guard who believed that physical struggle against the Dutch was the way to achieve their goal of an independent state.

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73 Formichi, Islam and the making, 94.
74 Ibid., 96.
75 Ibid.
76 Fogg, “Fate of Muslim Nationalism,” 119.
Meanwhile, on the ground in West Java, amid the confusion resulting from the arrival of Dutch troops in March 1947, Masyumi, according to Formichi, was manoeuvring to establish itself as a local government, implementing a tax in an effort to finance weapons purchases. The republican police chief in Tasikmalaya, Said Soerianatanegara, warned that Masyumi forces aimed to establish a “New State” (Negara Baru). Soon, clashes took place between Islamic and Republican troops, sometimes over weapons, sometimes over politics. But a number of incidents reveal that there was as much opportunism as there was Islamism in Masyumi’s early bid for control of West Java. Sabilillah and Hizbullah troops were not above collaborating with the Dutch if it gave a tactical advantage over the Republicans. For example, when a Sabilillah commander, Endang, was executed at Blubur Limbangan for treason against the Republic, in retaliation Endang’s brother, another Sabilillah leader, Wiganda, joined forces with the Dutch to capture a Siliwangi commander. This led to Dutch and Sabilillah troops conducting a joint kidnapping operation against Republicans, which is said to have led to the deaths of all those captured.

During this fraught period of the revolution, as Formichi observes in her study of Kartosuwirjo’s writings, the narrowing and hardening of his use of the concept of jihad provides an index to his ideological radicalization. Even so, the Republican government in Yogyakarta showed some positive signs in response to the calls of Kartosuwirjo and Masyumi for holy war. One republican commander, Major Kasman Singodimedjo, who was also a member of Masyumi, wrote to the Vice Minister of Defence supporting Kartosuwirjo’s call for jihad, stating that the central government could not “do anything other than thanking Allah, the One and Only God of the Indonesian Republic, because among his sons are some men as brave and courageous as Kartosuwirjo.”

More than any other single event, it was the Renville agreement, signed by the Dutch and the Republic on January 17, 1948, that served as the trigger for the establishment of

77 Formichi, Islam and the making, 100.
78 Ibid., 101.
79 Ibid., 106.
80 Ibid., 107.
the Islamic State of Indonesia. Renville sought to end the war by uniting Republican and Dutch held territory under a federal state, to be followed by a process of self-determination. Under these terms West Java had to be surrendered to Dutch forces. On February 10-11, as Siliwangi troops were preparing for their withdrawal, five hundred Masyumi members from West Java convened at a conference in Cisayong in order to better coordinate their response to the Dutch. The outcome of the conference was that Masyumi party operations in West Java were suspended and its organisation converted to a Majelis Oemat Islam (Islamic People’s Council), with Kartosoewirjo to serve as imam (religious and political leader). Maysumi militias Sabilillah and Hizboellah were merged into an Islamic Army of Indonesia (Tentara Islam Indonesia) with Raden Oni as its commander in chief. Formichi, citing Dutch reporting from the time, notes that while some of these decisions were not implemented until another conference held in Cirebon the following March, “this [Cisayong] meeting had already stated the intention of establishing an Islamic state that would implement Islamic laws in the daerah istimewa (special region) between Pagerageung, Cikoneng and Mount Sawal. It also declared a holy war and transformed the Sabilillah into the Tentara Islam Indonesia.”

When the Republican Siliwangi Division finally vacated West Java under the terms of the Renville agreement, it was portrayed by Republican leaders as a strategic withdrawal. But for Kartosoewirjo and many independence fighters based in West Java it was a betrayal of the revolution. As a consequence, then, of the Republic’s effective abandoning of territory to the Islamic militias, Darul Islam emerged from the outset with a strong territorial attachment to its West Java heartland. And from its base of West Java it planned to take over the whole country. At the March 1, 1948 meeting the West Java former Masyumi leaders ordered the Islamic army to “come to power in a tactful way, succeed in taking control of the Republic, and include it[s territory] within the Islamic state”.

Kartosoewirjo proclaimed the Islamic State of Indonesia on August 7, 1949. He could claim, with some legitimacy, that given the republican surrender of West Java to the

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81 Ibid., 115.
82 Ibid., 116.
Dutch an Islamic State had been established in a vacuum of power. In a statement announcing the proclamation, he wrote:

Praise be to God, at a moment that is vacant (vacuum), at a moment when there is no authority and no administration responsible ... thus at a critical moment ... the Muslim Community of the Indonesian Nation is so bold as to take a stand and position that is clear and explicit for the entire world: the proclamation of the establishment of the Islamic State of Indonesia, 7 August 1949.

Subsequently, the claim that the Islamic State established itself in 1949 in a “vacuum of power” would become the foundational myth of the movement. Drawing on this myth, Darul Islam rejects being characterised as a rebellion, opportunistically timed just prior to when Indonesia formally achieved its independence. Thus territory symbolised legitimacy. Meanwhile, successful Republican efforts to win independence through deft negotiation on the international stage were characterised by Darul Islam at the time as failures which justified the emergence of the Islamic State. Kartosoewirjo would later declare that the national struggle for independence of the last four years was over and that a holy war (perang suci) would take its place until the Islamic State is established “100% de facto and de jure over all of Indonesia.”

Towards the end of 1948, however, the Dutch had initiated their second military action, and, underscoring Kartoesoewirjo’s view of the Republic as weak and compromised, Sukarno and Hatta were captured. This development gave Kartosoewirjo the pretext to declare the Republic dead and assert his leadership of the revolution. But at the same time the Dutch action was considered a violation of Renville and thus justified the return of the Siliwangi Division to West Java. On its return, Siliwangi troops were surprised to meet armed resistance from Islamic Army troops who were loath to surrender control of West Java. Darul Islam refers to ensuing conflict as “triangular warfare,” with the Darul Islam troops arrayed against both Dutch and Republican forces. The role of defending the territory of a sovereign state, as they now saw it, only further galvanised the Muslim insurgents. Himawan Soetanto, a former Siliwangi commander who in his youth fought the Darul Islam in West Java, remembers the

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83 “Makloemat Pemerintah Negara Islam Indonesia No. II/7,” in Al-Chaidar, Pemikiran Politik Proklamator, 103.
determination of Darul Islam troops: “Fighting against them was tougher than if you compare it to fighting against the Dutch. [That was] because of their ideology—they were fighting for an Islamic state in Indonesia.”

As we can see, then, modern Indonesian jihadism has its origins in the very same revolutionary nationalist struggle that gave birth to the Republic. But what would Darul Islam’s Islamic State look like? Here, Darul Islam reveals itself as truly a child of the revolution. Referring to its constitution (Qanun Azasy), released on 27 August 1948, van Dijk observes, “Apart from the difference in terminology and the acknowledgement of the syari’ah, or Islamic Law, as the dominant legal system, the Qanun Azasy closely resembled the 1945 Constitution, which in fact was taken as its model, with some modifications.” According to the Qanun Azasy, the Islamic State would in fact be a “Republik”, although the document uses an equivalent Islamic term, “Djumhuryah”.

Nevertheless, Formichi argues that we should not discount the importance of the Qanun in the annals of 20th century political Islam:

Together with the 1949 criminal code, this text remains one of the very few attempts to formally structure an Islamic state in the Sunni Muslim world in the twentieth century, possibly only equalled by Nabhani’s Nizam al-Islam, which was published in 1952 and is still today the blueprint for creating an Islamic state for the global Hizbut-Tahrir movement.

The Islamic State of Indonesia’s status as historical precedent and its anti-Dutch revolutionary pedigree are its twin sources of symbolic power within militant Islamist circles until today. Kartosoewirjo, even at the time, saw the importance Darul Islam’s revolutionary nationalist image, arguing that the Islamic state, as he put it in December 1948, was “the continuation of the independence struggle, following on from and in line with the 17 August 1945 proclamation.”

84 Interview with Himawan Soetanto, July 25, 2007.
86 Formichi, Islam and the making, 124.
87 Ibid., 128.
Seen from this perspective, the Darul Islam rebellion, far from an outburst of religious fundamentalism, was a part of the independence movement that had gone “off-strategy” in that, partly as a result of the pressure of Dutch aggression, it rejected the politics of diplomacy and compromise waged by the principal leaders of the revolution in favour of a more militant approach. In fact, there were legitimate reasons for both militant and diplomatic responses to the Dutch and it was common for revolutionaries on either side to blame the Dutch for the internecine fighting. Former prime minister Muhammad Natsir, for example, blamed the initial emergence of Darul Islam on the Dutch invasion of Java in July 1947.88 At the same time, as Formichi has shown, some Republicans expressed sympathy with the Darul Islam cause. As clashes between Republican and Darul Islam troops took place, Major Ardiwinata, the commander of the TNI’s 3rd division, based in West Priangan, sent a letter to Darul Islam troops stating:

I am a member of TNI, but as a Muslim, I am proud of the Islamic spirit that burns in your hearts […] The goals of the TNI, to tell the truth, are not different from the goals of the DI’s fight, and it is not appropriate that we become each other’s enemies […] Don’t we all want a government blessed by Allah and endorsed by the people?89

Nowhere was this ambivalence felt more keenly than in the ranks of Masyumi, of which Darul Islam was a militant offshoot. Although it is not the case that Masyumi supported the Darul Islam rebellion, it is fair to say that many members sympathised with its ends while rejecting its means of achieving them. Such sympathy was evident from the statements made by the Masyumi leadership, which, although keen to avoid being classified along with traitors to the republic, were rather forgiving of Darul Islam. For example, Kasman Singodimedjo, former republican military commander and, later, chairman of Masyumi, said in 1955:

[The government] should not consider [the Darul Islam] an enemy, rather like a father his son. Regardless of how naughty the son, if taught a lesson he should not be beaten to death, rather given a lecture, or dealt just one blow, drenched in affection. It is similar with a domestic rebellious movement.90

88 Ibid., 140-141.
89 Ibid., 142.
90 Ibid., 145.
Millenarian revolt

Darul Islam was a rebellion triggered by temporal disagreements within the Indonesian independence movement in the 1940s. But one cannot understand how Darul Islam mobilized its local supporters and established control of rural territory without considering the way it drew on a long tradition of agrarian-based Islamic millenarian movements in Java that had periodically risen up against Dutch colonisers. Such movements combined Islamic themes of jihad and justice with Javanese mysticism, often in combination with charismatic leadership, in order to reject the Dutch imposition of taxes or corvée labour. The movements were typically characterised by messianic expectations about a coming age of peace and prosperity, drawing on what historian Peter Carey has called “the power of prophecy.”

The most well-known such movement was led by Prince Diponegoro, who rode his forces on horseback into the Java War of 1825–1830, in which as many as 200,000 Javanese died in fighting against Dutch counterinsurgency forces. Subsequently, Prince Diponegoro became an icon of Indonesian proto-nationalism. Darul Islam’s Kartosoewirjo was the inheritor the tradition carried forth by Diponegoro, a tradition seen in the way the rebellion’s support was localised in rural areas and its charismatic leadership intellectually “home schooled,” largely disconnected from the outside Muslim world.

Following Indonesia’s tradition of millenarian revolt, it is not surprising that Darul Islam thought was rooted in Javanese mysticism, and that the movement never developed a sophisticated Islamist ideology or political vision to distinguish itself from the republic. The diary of a Dutch soldier who fought with Darul Islam, Van Kleef, which gives a rare glimpse into the mystical world inhabited by ordinary Darul Islam foot soldiers. The diary was discussed by Karl Jackson in his study of the Darul Islam rebellion:

Van Kleef, a Dutchman who fought and died for the Dar’ul Islam, left behind a diary, and notably absent from this record of life in the rebel camps is any mention of the kind of intense political or religious socialization of recruits that has come to distinguish successful peasant revolutions in the twentieth century. Instead of attempting to instil

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92 Ibid., 602.
monolithic orthodoxy among peasant recruits, animist and syncretist beliefs and practises were rife among the Dar’ul Islam soldiery, and the movement never fostered among the rank and file a clear conception of how Indonesian life might be altered in the event that the rebels succeeded in superseding the Jakarta government.\textsuperscript{93}

Before it was a jihadist movement that would feed into the regional assemblage of the 1980s and beyond, Darul Islam was an insurgency. From early on, it sought to control territory and embodied a strong sense of being rooted in certain areas. Even before it proclaimed itself a state and one that sought to inherit the territory of the republic, Darul Islam, sought to exert influence over certain populations localised in particular geographical areas. As Sartono Kartodirdjo observes of the history of agrarian rebellion that was “endemic” to 19\textsuperscript{th} century Java, “most of the peasant uprisings were local and disconnected.”\textsuperscript{94} According to Kartodirdjo, their causes were also disparate: “Various grievances came to a head during such disturbances: economic and social as well as religious and political.” However, they often centred on a clash between Western and local culture, in which the fabric of traditional society was being undermined.\textsuperscript{95}

Darul Islam was able to leverage Islamic nationalism as a unifying theme and as a way to transcend its base in West Java, spreading itself eventually to parts of Aceh, South Sulawesi, South Kalimantan and Central Java. But even then, as Van Dijk demonstrates in his history of the various Darul Islam rebellions, the insurgency had different causal factors in different areas and subsequently followed different trajectories. He acknowledges that their separate histories mean that “it is even open to question whether in treating them all as part of a single movement we are not distorting reality.”\textsuperscript{96}

In his study of the Darul Islam movement in South Sulawesi, Hamdan Juhannis observes that the rebellion led there by Kahar Muzakkar, which had been triggered by grievances created among local militias who had been excluded from the professional


\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{96} Van Dijk, Rebellion under the Banner of Islam, 2.
republican army, only entered the Darul Islam fold and pledged loyalty to Kartosoewirjo in 1953, some three years into the conflict. Even after this time, Muzakkar’s rebellion acted largely autonomously from Darul Islam in the other provinces, fashioning its own revolutionary symbols and language that was often at variance with those of Kartosoewirjo’s Islamic State in West Java. Undoubtedly, the isolation of the Darul Islam’s scattered and separated territories, distributed across the vast Indonesian archipelago, made it difficult to forge a unified insurgency against the Republican state. “Despite the formal joining of the South Sulawesi to the DI movement,” Juhannis concludes, “it cannot be said that there was an active coordination between the central NII and the South Sulawesi NII due to the difficulties of maintaining contact at the time.”

Considering the various Darul Islam rebellions, Van Dijk puts them in the same category as a number of other peasant revolts that have occurred in agrarian societies. According to Van Dijk, Darul Islam shared one of the contributing factors to such rebellions: a changing pattern of land ownership from one based on traditional kinship to a more individualised, commodified one pattern—what he calls a change in the “agrarian structure.” Without exploring, as Van Dijk does, the merits of this argument and how it applies to the different regions of the Darul Islam rebellion, suffice it to observe that although Darul Islam as an insurgency sought to establish itself as a state coterminous with the republic its activity has always clustered in certain geographical areas in which it is seen to have a natural constituency. Although tenuous now, these geographical associations continue to this day. None of these areas is more closely associated with Darul Islam than the mountainous region of West Java, centring on the city of Garut, a region known as the Priangan. The region, as a basis of support for the Islamic State from which its territorial control can extend outwards, is so central to Darul Islam ideology that it is repeatedly referred to in the group’s founding documents as the “state basis” (negara basis) and “Madinah Indonesia,” a reference to the early Islamic polity founded by Muhammad in Madinah after his hijrah from Mecca. In his


98 Ibid., 49.

99 Van Dijk, Rebellion under the Banner of Islam, 363.
memoirs, in which he considers why West Java was the region in which the Islamic State was formed, Darul Islam veteran Kang Edi notes the favourable geography. “The city of Garut,” he writes, “is the only city that is surrounded by mountains, among them Mount Galunggung, Mount Cikuray, Mount Guntur, Mount Haruman, Mount Halimun and so on.” As such, it is fortified against an approach from the nearby regional capital of Bandung. “We feel,” he concludes, “that if Garut is under control it would be difficult to break [that control] because of the natural features that are very conducive.”

The pattern of Darul Islam, then, was one of a local millenarian revolt, rooted in local tradition and local territory. Not only was Darul Islam disconnected internally, it was completely disconnected from the major centres of the Muslim World, from which the movement might have gained material or intellectual support. As such Chiara Formichi concludes, “I see Kartosuwiryo’s radicalization as a development strictly correlated with domestic political and social dynamics.” There appears to be no trace of an influence on his thinking by contemporary Muslim revolutionaries such as the Muslim Brotherhood leader Hasan al-Banna or the founder of Pakistan’s Jamaat-e-Islami, Abu Ala Maududi. This is not to say that Kartosoewirjo was unaware of Islamic revivalists elsewhere in the world, or that they were unaware of Darul Islam. In fact, the scholar C.A.O. Nieuwenhuijze recounted that when he met with Muslim Brotherhood leaders in Cairo in 1950 he was asked about the Darul Islam. Although he notes that they appear to have been well-informed about the movement, he suspects that there may have been no actual relations between the two movements, each being so locally rooted. Consequently, Darul Islam, in terms of its ideology and worldview, had much more in common with Javanese millenarianism than it did with modernist Islamist movements in the Middle East.

**Negotiating with Darul Islam**

Lack of Islamist intellectual credentials notwithstanding, the proclamation of a home-grown Islamic state on the model of Madina had and continues to have great symbolic

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power among Islamists in Indonesia. Early on, Muhammad Natsir, tasked by prime minister Hatta in August 1949 to attempt peace negotiations with Kartosoewirjo, realised that it would be harder to stop the movement once Kartosoewirjo had proclaimed a state. In her political biography of Natsir, Audrey Kahin records that Natsir’s role was to negotiate on behalf of the republican government with both the Dutch puppet state of Pasundan in West Java and the Darul Islam, and specifically to get the latter to cease military operations against republican troops. Natsir was expected to draw on his personal acquaintance with Kartosoewirjo, and their mutual respect of Ahmad Hassan, the Bandung-based puritanical Islamist who had been a mentor to both. However, while staying overnight in Bandung, en route to making contact with Kartosoewirjo, Natsir got word that Kartosoewirjo was on the verge of proclaiming an Islamic state. Seeking to pre-empt any proclamation, Natsir tasked Ahmad Hassan to courier a note to Kartosoewirjo asking him not to go ahead with his plan. But, as Natsir recalled in an interview with Tempo, translated by Kahin, he was too late:

This letter reached the hands of Kartosuwirjo three days later, just when DI/TII was proclaimed. Yes it was late. This is called fate [takdir Tuhan]. Why was it late? Kartosuwirjo was indeed well guarded. No one was allowed to meet him. The guards only recognized Tuan Hassan after he introduced himself, “I am Hassan, Hassan of Bandung,” after waiting three days. [Even] if it had not been late it would not have been easy to convince Kartosuwirjo. For him it was hard to eat his words [menjilat ludah ke mbali]. That’s difficult. I met with his organization and many of its leaders in Bandung. They said that if Kartosuwirjo accepted, they would submit. But Kartosuwirjo didn’t give the order to submit.103

During the following years several attempts were made by the Republic to negotiate with Darul Islam, but all of these were rejected by Kartsoewirjo out of hand. The self-styled Imam made it a condition that any negotiation would have to be preceded by the Republic acknowledging his Islamic state. From the 1950s the government’s policy oscillated between a military solution and compromise or amnesty, with the secularists favouring a military solution and the Islamists favouring more compromise. As Formichi argues, notwithstanding Darul Islam’s image as one of the greatest threats to the Indonesian state, there was in the early years many failed chances for a peaceful resolution to the conflict:

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Archival sources clearly show that the scattered occurrences of cooperation that had dotted 1948 continued through 1949, and that, until the mid-1950s, military commanders and political leaders (mostly, but not exclusively, from Masyumi) suggested that the Republic should put its efforts into finding a political solution to the Darul Islam problem.\(^\text{104}\)

Between 1948 and 1949 Mohammad Hatta sent two letters to Kartosoewirjo seeking a negotiated settlement and a unified strategy against the Dutch. He also offered Kartosoewirjo a Republican medal of honour. Apparently both were ignored.\(^\text{105}\) In late 1949, at the initiative of Masyumi, the Republik Indonesia Serikat formed the Commission for the Solution of the Darul Islam Problem (Panitia Penyelesaian Darul Islam), but by the middle of the following year the commission had faded into irrelevancy having achieved very little.\(^\text{106}\) In mid-1950 a mission to negotiate with Kartosoewirjo was led by the Masyumi leader Wali Alfatah on behalf of the Minister of the Interior. However, his efforts were undercut by a clash between Republican and Darul Islam troops, the result of which was that Alfatah was held captive by the latter, only to be found weeks later in a poor state and suffering from malaria. Alfatah later gave a press conference stating that the only way to end the Darul Islam problem is with military force even if it resulted in many casualties.\(^\text{107}\)

The impression that the start of the 1950s was the biggest missed opportunity to put an early end to Darul Islam is enhanced by a pair of ingratiating nota rahasia or secret letters addressed by Kartosoewirjo to Soekarno and copied to prime minister Natsir. Boland speculated that Kartosoewirjo may have hoped to receive a sympathetic hearing during the government of Natsir, a fellow Islamist. Indeed, aside from a rambling attempt to make common cause with the Republic against the menace of Communism, in which he describes the Islamic State and the Republic as “friends on the same path,” the letter goes on further to advise Soekarno that “there is no other ideology besides

\(^\text{104}\) Formichi, *Islam and the making*, 146.
\(^\text{105}\) Ibid., 149.
\(^\text{106}\) Ibid., 150.
‘Islamism’ that is capable and has the power to arrest the flow of Communism and annihilate it.” Meanwhile, Kartosoewirjo argued, Nationalism was not an ideology:

*Nationalism, which has become the foundation, the basis and the orientation of the Negara Republik Indonesia, is not an ideology per se like Islamism or Communism. Rather, it represents only a certain level of ‘love and affection’ of a certain people for themselves and the land of their birth.*

Kartosoewirjo continued, “Only Islamism, as an ideology and world system [stelsel dunia] is capable of overcoming problems that may occur as a result of the arrival of the Red peril.” He concludes that the most efficacious medicine for Indonesia, with all its myriad problems, is “If Islamism is made the founding principle of the government and state of Indonesia!” Finally, he invites the Republic of Indonesia to change its name to “Negara Islam Indonesia”.

The second *nota rahasia* made many of the same points as the first, and attempted to cast the NII as a “friend” of the Republic. It did, however, make a firmer stand on the issue of the Republic accepting the existence of the NII as a “fait accompli” and the “sacred right of the Muslim Community [Ummat] of the Indonesian Nation.” There was also an implied threat that if the Republic would not acknowledge the proclamation of the Islamic State of 1949, then, “We cannot take responsibility for the fate of the State and the Nation of Indonesia before the court of history and before the court of Allah.” Taken together, the secret letters betray an isolated and deluded Kartosoewirjo, who was obsessed with the fate of Indonesia in the Cold War but, having cut himself off from Indonesian political discourse, had very little of substance to contribute to the issue. Nevertheless, the letters also demonstrate a willingness to negotiate on Kartosoewirjo’s part, which, with the hindsight of the following decade of violence, was perhaps not exploited as much as it should have been.

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109 Ibid., 247.
110 Ibid., 248.
111 Ibid., 253-254.
112 Ibid., 254.
Similarly, other efforts at a peaceful settlement were undermined by a combination of Darul Islam intransigence and a lack of coherence on the Republican side between those who favoured negotiation and those who favoured force. In November 1950 Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir announced an amnesty for all irregular troops that had not yet joined the republic and were still fighting republican forces. In what B.J. Boland describes as a “moving speech”, Natsir broadcast a statement to

“the freedom fighters who have not yet returned to normal life” because they “do not yet feel satisfied with the results of the struggle for freedom, or are still standing aloof as a result of mutual conflicts during the past years of the fight for freedom.” He called on them to abandon their guerrilla methods and to devote themselves to the development to the new Indonesian state.113

This move did have partial success in that it eventually led to the surrender of Amir Fatah, the DI Central Java leader, via the good offices of PSII leader and head of the office of religion for Central Java, Kyai Muslich. Natsir also sent Muslich, with the same aims, to Kartosoeuwirjo, who he had known well through PSII. But again, the emissary was unsuccessful in making contact, this time Kartosoeuwirjo rejecting Muslich as too lowly ranked to meet someone of his stature, the Imam of the Islamic State and that he would only negotiate if the government first acknowledge the Islamic State. Muslich, however, was given two letters to take back to Natsir, one of them a personal communication in which Kartosoeuwirjo advised him that as prime minister he had the power to add the letter “I” to the end of RI, making it “Republik Islam Indonesia.” If Natsir obliged, Kartosoeuwirjo assured him that he was have his full support.114 As Dengel notes, Natsir’s amnesty was a failure in that very few of the total number of troops surrendered and it was undermined at the time by a West Java TNI declaration at the same time which listed Darul Islam among sixteen banned organisations.115

Another failed attempt at brokering peace was initiated by the GPII and Masyumi politician Affandi Ridhwan, who believed the conflict could be solved by integrating the guerrillas into the Republic. But when his proposals received no official reaction he

113 Ibid., 60.
114 Dengel, Darul Islam dan Kartosuwirjo, 157-158.
115 Ibid., 159.
decided to negotiate directly with Darul Islam, with the agreement of Deputy Prime Minister Prawoto Mangkusasmito. He succeeded in meeting with Kartosoewirjo’s close associate and NII minister for foreign and internal affairs, Sanusi Partawidjaja in Darul Islam controlled territory. But once in discussion, Partawidjaja repeated the Darul Islam precondition that the Republik first acknowledge the Islamic State of Indonesia before negotiations. Affandi Ridwan responded that this was impossible and that if Darul Islam was desperate for acknowledgement, why do they want it from the Republik, which they do not even consider to be an independent state; they would be better off getting acknowledgement from the US or Saudi Arabia, he suggested helpfully. Eventually Partawidjaja dropped the precondition, but, in another example of the incoherence of the Republican strategy on Darul Islam, Affandi was ignored by the deputy prime minister for several weeks, only to then be arrested and subsequently jailed for aiding the enemy.

At the end of 1949 the Dutch and Indonesians signed the Hague agreement which formally transferred sovereignty from the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the independent Republic of the United States of Indonesia (RUSI). As an independent state, Indonesia was entitled to reform its system of administration, and immediately begun to dissolve the Dutch-sponsored federal states in a move to turn the “united states” into a unitary Republic of Indonesia. This so-called unitary movement was greatly spurred by an attempted coup d’etat in Bandung, and later, Jakarta, in early 1950 by forces led by Captain Raymond Westerling, commanding de-mobilised Royal Netherlands Indies troops along with Dutch troops. The unitarians enjoyed rapid success and on August 17, 1950 the unitary state of the Indonesian Republic was re-established, marking the end to the Indonesian war of independence.

Darul Islam, however, did not see developments the same way. It railed against the unitary state as a “modern form of colonialism” and as being antithetical to the ideals of the revolution. But under almost any interpretation the Indonesian Republic was the

\[116\] Ibid., 161.
\[117\] Ibid., 162.
culmination of the revolution, and if previous federal entities could have been dismissed by Darul Islam as the continuation of Dutch colonialism in another form, this was no longer possible under a republic now recognised as the newest member of the United Nations. Formichi argues that the proclamation of the unitary state in 1950 was a particularly devastating blow to the Negara Islam Indonesia because Darul Islam had still hoped to have the legitimacy of the NII recognised within the federal system, at least in West Java.\textsuperscript{120}

There is some evidence that rather than a rogue operator, Westerling, the Dutch special forces commander notorious for his brutal suppression of Republicans in South Sulawesi, may have served in a covert capacity for the supreme commander of Dutch forces in the Netherlands Indies, Simon H. Spoor, who, according to archival evidence, ran his own covert operations, unbeknownst to the Netherlands government.\textsuperscript{121} In Westerling’s autobiography—a cartoonish and self-regarding account of how he, among other heroic exploits, brought peace to West Java at the request of the local population—he tells of how he first went to Spoor in Jakarta with the proposal of forming a self-defense force to defend the independence of West Java in the Federal Union. According to Westerling’s account, Spoor gave him tacit approval, saying, “I think your present idea is excellent. Of course, I can’t do anything officially. My hands are tied. But if you choose to go ahead on your own responsibility….\textsuperscript{122}

One particularly interesting aspect of Westerling’s involvement as it relates to Darul Islam is that not only did the Dutch operative co-opt a range of armed groups active in West Java in 1949 into his force, including what he describes as “lost battalions” of the Darul Islam movement,\textsuperscript{123} he appears to have copied the Kartosoewirjo playbook by, first, using the guise of establishing local “self-defence” as a means to a more political end,\textsuperscript{124} and second, in realizing the legitimacy that comes from being seen by the local

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Raymond Westerling, Challenge to Terror (London: Kimber, 1952), 152.
population from which he recruited as a mystically ordained Just Prince (Ratu Adil), who it is said in the Joyoboyo prophecies since at least the early 19th century will one day return to bring peace and prosperity to the land. Thus, although he candidly states that in his recruitment of former Darul Islam troops he was “putting terrorists to work as a defence against terrorism,” the latter terrorists being the Republican forces, his force would adopt the name Armed Forces of the Just Prince (Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil). Just like Kartosoewirjo, Westerling is careful to give the impression that such mystical significance was bestowed upon him by his followers, yet he admits that, “This belief in the fore-ordained success of my mission was too precious an asset to be ignored,”—an admission that might as well have been made by Kartosoewirjo.

Defeating Darul Islam
One of the priorities of Indonesia’s first post-revolution government, led by the Masyumi politician, Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir, was to consolidate unification by restoring order in rebellion-torn areas and re-absorbing guerrillas into the TNI or civilian society. If there was ever a window of opportunity to resolve the Darul Islam conflict peacefully it was now, with Natsir’s authority as leader of Masyumi, an Islamist party with shared end goals with Darul Islam and, at the time, the largest representation in the parliament. Indeed, as Herb Feith evaluated it, Natsir’s government was able to achieve considerable success in restoring order. “Thanks in part to good cabinet-army relations a number of rebel-bandit groups of old guerrillas were driven out of their jungle fastnesses in Sumatra and Java,” he wrote. He had also reached an agreement, albeit short-lived, with future Darul Islam leader in South Sulawesi, Kahar Muzakar, to absorb his troops into the TNI, bringing peace to South Sulawesi. And the Christian rebellion under the banner of the “Republic of the South Moluccas” had been quashed.

In 1951 there were other successes. In one of the biggest battle successes of the TNI against Darul Islam troops, NII defense minister Oni was killed and justice minister and Kartosoewirjo confidante Gozali Tusi was captured. In a separate event, the leader of

125 Westerling, Challenge to Terror, 151.
126 Ibid., 156.
the Darul Islam in Central Java, the glamorous Amir Fatah surrendered in West Java. But the opportunity to nip the movement in the bud had been lost. Darul Islam would remain the greatest threat to the Indonesian Republic in its first decade of existence. Darul Islam historian Holk Dengel, who was living in Indonesia at the time, observed that at nights Darul Islam controlled the roads of West Java and that even on the Bandung-Jakarta highway, vehicles had better be off the road by four in the afternoon and have entered a city if they wanted to avoid the rebels. In the 1950s too Darul Islam increased its practice of attacking villages in Republican held territory that were perceived as having sided with the Republic. Darul Islam’s hardened attitude towards “enemies” was evidenced by its approach to Kiai Jusuf Taudjiri, a former spiritual mentor to Kartosoewirjo and someone who had been present at early Darul Islam ceremonies. By the late 1940s, however, Kartosoewirjo saw Taudjiri as a traitor after the latter had left the Islamic state and rejected the imposition on a NII tax (infaq) on people in his village. Consequently, Taudjiri’s pesantren, Darussalam in Cipari, West Java, was said to have been attacked 46 times from the late 1940s to late 1950s. The conflict with Taudjiri peaked in 17 April 1952 when hundreds of Darul Islam troops attacked the school, and students forced to defend themselves with only a few old firearms.

If the start of the 1950s was that great opportunity to bring a negotiated end to the Darul Islam rebellion, 1953 marked the beginning of a tougher government response to Darul Islam. With the formation of the Ali Sastroamidjojo government, for the first time Masyumi was left out of the cabinet, marking a decline in the political influence of the party most strongly advocating for a peaceful settlement. First Deputy Prime Minister Wongsonegoro called for a “final operation” (komando terakhir) against the rebels.

The period was also marked by deadlock in the constitutional assembly which was tasked to write Indonesia’s new democratic constitution but had become divided over

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the issue of whether the state should be based on Islam or not. The issue had already polarised Indonesia’s political elite, with Soekarno drawing criticism from Masyumi and other Muslim groups after his 1953 speech in Amuntai which argued strongly against an Islamic State. Meanwhile, the Darul Islam insurgency was used by opponents of an Islamic State to discredit the Masyumi position as allied with extremism. In the run up to the 1955 elections to fill the constituent assembly, one Masyumi politician, Isa Anshary, said provocatively: "In Indonesia at the present time," he said, "there is a cold war between Islam on the one hand and on the other those who call themselves Islamic and aren't. The central question is whether the state is to be based on God's law or not."133

But the 1955 elections were a disappointment for the Muslim nationalists arguing for an Islamic state. They found their vote split between Masyumi, and a newly separate Nahdlatul Ulama. Without the ability to form a pro-Islamic state coalition in the assembly, Masyumi found their agenda was blocked. Later, the deadlock in the assembly provided a pretext for Soekarno to abolish Indonesia’s experiment with constitutional democracy in 1959 and return to the 1945 constitution, consolidating his own power as president.

1955 was also the year that a regional rebellion in Aceh, led by Daud Beureu’eh, merged with Darul Islam under the banner of the Islamic State of Indonesia, marking perhaps the rebellion’s most politically significant geographical expansion. As a revered independence fighter, Beureu’eh brought with him revolutionary credentials and the popular support his movement enjoyed among the Acehnese people.

Despite the support of Beureu’eh, however, in the 1950s Darul Islam’s goal of an Islamic state looking increasing distant and the rebellion became increasingly ruthless, especially towards civilians. According to Boland, Darul Islam “formed one of the greatest worries for the government of the Republic of Indonesia.”134 The rebellion encompassed not just mountainous West Java but also parts of Central Java. As

133 Ibid., 283.
134 Boland, *Struggle of Islam*, 54.
mentioned above, rebellions under the rubric of Darul Islam, characterized by local concerns, had emerged in South Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and Aceh. The local factors causing the rebellions varied, but according to Van Dijk the rebellions shared two proximate causes. First, grievance at the ascendancy of the Republican army over irregular troops and the attendant disputes over which elements of the irregular forces would be demobilized and which would be incorporated into the regular army. Second, disaffection with the central government’s increasing control over the provinces.\(^{135}\) In Java, the rebellion peaked in the mid- to late 1950s, a time that saw Darul Islam burning villages which it deemed had betrayed Islam. According to Holk H. Dengel, who cites figures of unknown provenance, the conflict caused considerable destruction and death in West Java between 1953 and 1958, with 11,521 people killed, 362,009 houses burned, and 1,081,713 people internally displaced.\(^{136}\)

It was the emergence the regional rebellions in the latter half of the 1950s, along with the decline of constitutional democracy in Indonesia, that hardened Soekarno’s attitude toward dissidents and ushered a return of the influence of the military in handling rebellions. As Formichi points out, the new climate of repression set the scene for the final operations to defeat Darul Islam once and for all.\(^{137}\) It did not help that the so-called Permesta/PRRI rebellion in West Sumatra had links to Masyumi, which would lead Soekarno to ban the party and thus suppress a large section of the Muslim constituency. Also contributing to a late Soekarno-era climate of repression was an assassination attempt on Soekarno in Cikini, Jakarta on 30 November 1957. At an official government function snipers failed to hit Soekarno but shot bystanders near him; the close call, the closest Soekarno came to being killed in his political career, may account for the merciless way he dealt with his old colleague Kartosoewirjo when the latter was finally captured in 1962.

The culmination of a hardened military and government approach to resolving Darul Islam by force was Operation Annihilate (Gerakan Operasi Penumpasan) in 1959, set against the backdrop of Soekarno’s abolition of parliamentary democracy, the return to

\(^{135}\) Van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam*, 340.


the 1945 constitution and the beginning of the authoritarian era of “Guided Democracy”. The Siliwangi division, which until then had employed a conventional “passive-defensive” approach to military strategy, with stationary deployments of troops, switched to an “active-offensive” strategy deploying mobile units more suited to counter-insurgency. Central to the success of the final military push against Darul Islam was the employment, in 1960, of the “fence of legs” (pagar betis) tactic in which civilians were conscripted to march in rows uphill from the base of Darul Islam mountain hideouts, flushing out the rebels by forcing them to choose between capture or firing on civilians.

Already devastated by the “fence of legs” operations, Darul Islam was decapitated on June 4, 1962 when Kartosoewirjo, along with several of his officers, was captured in a valley in a mountainous area of the Bandung regency. The operation was led by a company from the Siliwangi Division, who were able to sneak up on a group of forty-six Darul Islam soldiers at two bivouacs spotted in the valley, one of which sheltered the sick and malnourished Imam. A heavy downpour at the time masked the sound of the approach troops. Captain Ara, the soldier who claimed to have first discovered Kartosoewirjo, Ara Suhara, gave an account of the capture of Kartosoewirjo to a local journalist in 1979. Captain Ara recalled that he was able to approach Kartosoewirjo’s shelter during the firefight that had broken out between the two sides. After briefly facing off with two soldiers guarding the entrance to the hut—one was Kartosoewirjo’s son Dodo Mohammad Darda and the other his senior lieutenant Aceng Kurnia—Ara entered to find only an “old grandfather” wrapped up in a striped blanket.

The way in which Ara, a Republican army captain, recalled the encounter is a testament to the aura of mysticism surrounding Kartosoewirjo. According to Ara, after answering to his name, Kartosoewirjo’s first words were, “Three days ago I knew you would be coming here, son.” They shook hands and then embraced. Then, Kartosoewirjo asked Ara to turn around. With his back to Kartosoewirjo, Ara’s collar was unbuttoned and he felt Kartosoewirjo’s cold breath on his neck as the Imam said a mantra and blessed his...

138 Ibid., 168.
nape with saliva. Then, in a demonstration of the Imam’s ability to see into the future, he offered a pen as a memento to be given to Ara’s son who would be born two days’ later. “Give this to your child, the son who will be born,” he said. Before informing his commanding officer, Suhanda, that he had found Kartosoewirjo, Captain Ara says he noticed the many magical objects hanging in Katosuwiryo’s shelter. It appears he took custody of many of them, including a yellow keris (ceremonial dagger) with a pure gold scabbard and a hilt set with sparkling diamonds, a black keris, several magic irons (besi kuning) and a “Gatutkaca war vest,” covered in Arabic script, Gatutkaca being the warlike character in the Mahabharata who possessed a magical vest which enabled him to fly. Captain Ara was so moved by his encounter with Kartosoewirjo that he named his son “Sekar Ibrahim,” Sekar taken from Kartosoewirjo’s first name and Ibrahim after Ibrahim Adjie, his Siliwangi Division commander who had led the successful military defeat of Darul Islam.141

On August 1, 1962, thirty-two of the most senior captured Darul Islam leaders signed a Joint Declaration (Ikrar Bersama) in which, in return for amnesty, they renounced the movement for an Islamic State and declared their allegiance to the Republic.142 This was followed, on August 7, by Kartosoewirjo’s order to his followers to surrender. Dictated to his son, Dodo Mohammad Darda, the order read:

To all members of the APNII [Armed Forces of the Islamic State of Indonesia] and Jama’atul Mujahidin, wherever they are located, to cease fire and end their enmity with TNI/APRI [Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia] and report themselves to the nearest TNI post, bringing all their equipment and documents.143

Later that month Kartosoewirjo was convicted in a special military court in Jakarta of subversion and ordering the 1957 assassination attempt on Soekarno. He was sentenced to death by firing squad. On August 20 he requested a pardon from Soekarno, but this was rejected.

141 Ibid.
142 “Ikrar-Bersama,” Bandung, August 1, 1962, author collection.
143 Al-Chaidar, Pemikiran Politik Proklamator, 206.
On September 12, 1962, Kartosoewirjo, after being granted a final meal with his family and time to perform a prayer of forgiveness, drawn and dishevelled he was handcuffed and put on a boat by military police. From the boat he was transferred to a military landing craft, where he was given a final medical appraisal by a military doctor. He was then dressed in a white cloth and more white cloth was tied around his face as a blindfold. The landing craft took him to the small uninhabited island of Ubi in the Thousand Islands group off the coast of Jakarta. There he was tied to a post and executed by a military firing squad. His corpse was ceremonially bathed in the ocean and wrapped in a shroud, according to Islamic ritual. A final prayer was made before he was buried on the island and the execution post and other implements were burned.144

Until recently, for fifty years, Kartosoewirjo’s final resting place was unknown. Unofficial Darul Islam historian Al Chaidar argues that it was a deliberate strategy of Soekarno not to allow Kartosoewirjo to be buried near his home in West Java, in accordance with his last wishes. This was because, he writes, “Soekarno feared the spiritual power that might emanate from the figure of S.M. Kartosoewirjo in the future.”145

Conclusion

The origins of jihadism in Indonesia can be traced to the radicalising experience of the fight for independence against the Dutch: Indonesian jihadists were originally revolutionary nationalists. Furthermore, the way in which jihad was expressed by Darul Islam drew on the mystical traditions of local Islamic millenarian movements that had rebelled against the Dutch in previous eras. For both these reasons, Indonesia’s early jihadists were highly territorialised actors, grounded first in the local geography of agrarian millenarianism, and second in the vision of a unified Islamic state with borders inherited from the Indonesian republic. Yet despite seeking legitimacy from two of Indonesia’s most powerful indigenous traditions—revolutionary nationalism and Islamic millenarianism—for most Indonesians, Darul Islam never transcended its image as an assortment of rebellions at the fringes of Indonesia’s independence movement.

144 For a remarkable photographic account, see Fadli Zon, comp., *Hari terakhir Kartosoewirjo: 81 foto eksekusi Imam DI/TII* (Jakarta: Fadli Zon Library), 2012.

These disparate rebellions never overcame the logistical challenge of coordinating their institutions and consolidating their territories across the islands of the Indonesian archipelago. For the majority of Indonesians, periodic rebellions such as these, whether inspired by Islam or something else, had merely frustrated the successful emergence of Indonesia on to the world stage. Over time, the Darul Islam movement would become, if not quite a footnote to history, a minor event in the story of Indonesia that one could be forgiven for skimming over. But as we shall see in the following chapter, Darul Islam’s endurance as an underground movement would become one of its defining characteristics. Despite Darul Islam members’ ongoing territorial pretentions such endurance would from now on manifest in the form of a militant social network—a form consonant with the fragmented geography of archipelagic Southeast Asia.
It is difficult to imagine the emergence of a Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage had there not been a revival of Indonesia’s Darul Islam movement. The Darul Islam rebellion had been crushed and its leader had been eliminated. But S.M. Kartosoewirjo lived on in the minds of many as a martyr and pioneer of Islamic statehood. As I have argued elsewhere, thanks to the revival of the movement in the 1970s his following endured as an “imagined community,” a social network of adherents who see themselves as citizens of a still-sovereign Islamic State of Indonesia. The protracted struggle between this community and the Indonesian state under President Suharto was an indispensable part of the historical process that led to regional assemblage.

For Darul Islam diehards, the desperate times after Kartosoewirjo’s death had been prophesied by their leader. Three years before his execution, Kartosoewirjo had delivered a statement that is now considered to be his last testament. According to Darul Islam historians, in 1959, when the rebellion was under enormous military pressure, Kartosoewirjo made a rallying cry before his commanders and other officers in the form of a prophecy in the Joyoboyo tradition, forecasting a time of hardship—before ultimate victory—in which everything will be turned upside down. Reportedly, he said, “I see signs of a coming storm that will sweep clean all Mujahid, leaving only a few Mujahid who will truly champion and defend the establishment of the Islamic State of Indonesia, as proclaimed on 7 August 1949.” Kartosoewirjo continued, “At the moment this storm comes, remember this testament:

Friend will become foe, and foe will become friend.
Officers will become soldiers, and soldiers will become officers.
Mujahid will become non-Mujahid.
If a Mujahid reneges [on his duty], remember that this is more evil than Satan, because he knows the strategy and secrets of our struggle, while the enemy does not.

146 Quinton Temby, “Imagining an Islamic State in Indonesia: From Darul Islam to Jemaah Islamiyah,” Indonesia 89 (April 2010). Parts of this chapter draws on research conducted for this article and my Honours thesis, on which the article was based.
If the Imam is incapacitated and you are cut off from your commanders and you are left with only a small soldier, then the small soldier must be willing to become Imam. If the Imam surrenders, shoot him, because that is Satan. If the Imam orders to continue the struggle, follow him as a servant of Allah s.w.t. If you have lost the conditions of the struggle, continue the struggle as long as Pancasila [ secularism ] still exists, and even if you are left with only one tooth, use that one tooth to bite. If it is still a time of jihad, remember that safety is a poison.  

Although the authenticity of the prophecy is questionable, the power of its narrative is not. Later, while in Republican custody, Kartosoewirjo ordered his remaining followers to surrender. Subsequently, however, the prophecy, appealing to Darul Islam’s millenarian roots, was seen by many of his followers as having greater force than the order to surrender. The last testament is the centerpiece of a 1987 publication by Darul Islam commander Abdul Fatah Wirananggapati, At-Tibyan (“Exposition”), which he hoped would help to reboot the movement. Wirananggapati had been imprisoned from 1953 to 1963, after which he was given amnesty and released, having avoided signing the Joint Declaration to renounce the struggle. However, he was a controversial figure in Darul Islam. Many did not agree that he was, as he claimed, the next in line to be Imam. But his central claim—that the Islamic State was still alive and sovereign—would become a shibboleth for underground Darul Islam militants of the post-Kartosoewirjo era, and would underpin a revival of the movement during President Suharto’s New Order regime, a revival that was sponsored by the regime itself.

The Darul Islam revival would end in failure. The very premise of the movement that made it so resilient—the historic Islamic State of Indonesia—made sense during the revolution, when territorial control was still contestable, but was no match for Suharto’s military regime. Its failure, however, played an integral part in the historical process that led to the formation of a regional jihadist assemblage. During this period, a new


148 Researcher Solahudin recounts another Darul Islam revival myth: it is believed by at least some followers that when Darul Islam adjutant Aceng Kurnia and the leader’s son Dodo were helping Kartuawiryo onto a stretcher to be carried away into Siliwangi custody, the Imam whispered, “This is our Hudaibiyah” three times in succession. “Hudaibiyah” is a reference in hadith to the valley near Mecca where in 628 Muhammad made a truce of ten years with the leaders of Mecca, only to attack Mecca and become victorious over the same leaders the following year. See Solahudin, NII sampai JI: Salafy Jihadisme di Indonesia (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2011), 74.
generation of militants was radicalized, while key leaders of the revival learned the hard way that in Suharto’s Indonesia not only was political Islam repressed at the parliamentary level by the military and intelligence apparatus, the very same apparatus had thoroughly co-opted and penetrated their own underground networks. There was scant space for criticism of the regime in any corner of society. As Vincent Boudreau argues in his study of New Order repression, the state capitalised on the mass extermination of suspected communists in 1965-1966 to keep subsequent civil society challenges to the system isolated and unorganised.\textsuperscript{149} A sense of suffocating repression during this period would eventually push militant leaders into exile in Malaysia, where they would learn how to exploit transnational space.

In hindsight, also, some of the unsuccessful jihadist operations during this period can be seen as trial runs for later successes. In the 1970s, for the first time jihadists sought to use Malaysia as a site to mobilise resources for the movement that could not be found locally in Indonesia. In the 1980s they made their first amateurish attempt at an attack on tourist spots in Bali. But Darul Islam militants showed themselves to be too politically compromised, divided and disorganized to present any real threat to the Suharto regime. Even as New Order repression of Muslims reached new heights in the 1980s, Darul Islam was too weak to take advantage of the situation.

\textbf{Co-opting Darul Islam}

Following the defeat of the Darul Islam insurgency, senior Darul Islam militants were cultivated by the Siliwangi Division of the Indonesian army, which offered them business opportunities in exchange for continued compliance and cooperation.\textsuperscript{150} The Siliwangi Division established a patronage relationship with Darul Islam under the sympathetic leadership of Siliwangi Commander Ibrahim Adjie. Adjie, like other Siliwangi officers, respected the tenacity of the Darul Islam fighters, and placed an emphasis on “guidance” (pembinaan) rather than punishment. It was under this policy that Siliwangi intervened to reclaim the Kartosoewirjo family land in Malangbong, West Java, for the use of the executed leader’s family and descendants. But, over the


\textsuperscript{150} Solahudin, \textit{NII sampai JI}, 83.
course of the New Order administration, Siliwangi control of Darul Islam patronage was challenged by Suharto’s shadowy intelligence chief, Ali Moertopo. According to General Soemitro (the 1973–74 Kopkamtib Commander who famously clashed with Ali Moertopo), rivalry emerged between Siliwangi and Moertopo’s Opsus organization over control of Darul Islam after Opsus’s entry into what was considered Siliwangi territory. Former Darul Islam members, he says, “at the beginning were managed by Kodam Siliwangi so that they would not continue the movement ... but suddenly [they were] pulled by Ali Moertopo to Jakarta.”151 Siliwangi appears to have been politically outmaneuvered by Moertopo, the latter enjoying a closer personal relationship to Suharto.

Ali Moertopo came to prominence after 1965, soon after General Suharto came to power after a failed coup by a section of the Indonesian Communist Party triggered military-led massacres of suspected communists across the country, causing the deaths of an estimated 500,000 people.152 Soekarno and his leftist politics were vanquished as Muslim militants in Java were mobilized to take part in the killings. The majority of such militants were in fact affiliated with mainstream organizations—the youth wing of the Nahdlatul Ulama being the most notorious example. Still, to a largely unknown extent, the communist purges also attracted Darul Islam militants, who were already virulently anticommunist. They had been primed by Kartosoewirjo, who, as we saw in the previous chapter, had sent an apocalyptic secret letter to President Sukarno prophesising a “Third World War” between Cold War powers, and warning—with some accuracy, as it turned out—of communist preparations to stage a coup d’état. Kartosoewirjo had urged the Republic’s leaders to protect the sovereignty of the state and referred to his advice in an earlier secret letter, which counselled that there was no other way to ensure the security of the Indonesian state and nation other than “if the government of the Republic of Indonesia begins now, swiftly and surely, to eradicate Communism in every area.” In return for official recognition of the Islamic State, he

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guaranteed that “the Indonesian Republic would have a friend for life in facing any potential [threat] from without and from within, especially in facing Communism.”

Set against this background, under Suharto’s New Order anti-communism became the pretext for an strategic alliance between certain Darul Islam figures and the government. Solahudin writes that New Order officials such as the intelligence czar Ali Moertopo and Siliwangi commander H.R Dharsono, “sought the help of former DI leaders, like Ateng Djelani, Adah Djelani, Danu Muhammad Hasan and Dodo Muhammad Darda to mobilize former DI soldiers in West Java and Central Java against the PKI.” According to Adah Djelani, Darul Islam members paid for the mobilization themselves. However, as the institutional “handler” of Darul Islam in West Java, the Siliwangi Division found itself in competition for control of the movement with Ali Moertopo, who had helped organise early political support for Suharto’s rise to power and who is sometimes described as the “architect” of the New Order. Moertopo had the power and creativity to forge patronage relationships with politically compromised figures, often by rehabilitating them in return for their carrying out dubious activities to advance regime agendas. He organised such people under the auspices of an ad hoc network for clandestine operations known as Opsus (Operasi Khusus, Special Operations). Opsus employed elements from a number of revolutionary groups, including the PRRI (Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia, Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia), the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party), and Darul Islam.

Darul Islam figures were likely considered useful to the regime due to their anti-communist zeal and their willingness to be put to violent purposes. Danu Mohammad Hasan, a commander from West Java who had signed the Joint Declaration in 1962, was Ali Murtopo’s main point of contact in the movement. Danu was recruited by Opsus officer Aloysius Sugiyanto, who, in early 1966 used him and his men to pursue pro-Sukarno officials who had gone into hiding, suspected of being involved in the

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153 S. M. Kartosoewirjo to Sukarno in Boland, Struggle of Islam, 250–255.
154 Solahudin, NII sampai JI, 84.
155 See, for example, Andrew MacIntyre, “Organising Interests: Corporatism in Indonesian Politics” (working paper no. 43, Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University, 1994), 6.
156 Conboy, Second Front, 12-15.
attempted coup. According to Sugiyanto, Danu himself led a failed operation to abduct Sukarno’s foreign minister and intelligence chief, Dr. Subandrio.  

The revival of the Darul Islam movement more generally, however, was initiated by two leaders who believed fervently that Kartosoevirjo’s last wishes were for his followers to continue the struggle. In 1968 Aceng Kurnia, a former adjutant to Kartosoevirjo, began to recruit a following of Darul Islam leaders based in the West Java city of Bandung, while Djaja Sudjadi, former Islamic State of Indonesia minister for finance, recruited a local following in the former Darul Islam stronghold of Garut. They both began reviving contacts with Darul Islam leaders outside Java, notably with Gao Taufik in North Sumatra and Daud Beureu’eh, the former Republican governor of Aceh, who had joined Darul Islam in 1953 in reaction to Aceh’s forced merger with the province of North Sumatra. Also in 1968, a rank-and-file member, Ridwan, and his associates, established a ten-member study group to advance the argument that surrender in 1962 had been a mistake and that the struggle should continue. Ridwan’s revivalist efforts were frustrated by recriminations over who was responsible for the 1962 defeat and the reluctance of some veterans to commit to action without clear approval from their former senior commanders. But, fatefuly, they did secure the support of one former commander, Danu Mohammad Hasan, the same commander who had been co-opted by Ali Moertopo into the Suharto regime’s anti-communist operations.

Controversially, Danu Mohammad Hasan would become the central figure of the Darul Islam revival. He was at the centre of two decisive events that shaped the movement during the New Order period, helping the government to co-opt the movement and ultimately to crush its revival when it felt it had lost control of the militants. First, in 1970, he and other Darul Islam leaders signed what would be the founding document of the Darul Islam–New Order relationship. Known as the Second Declaration (Ikrar Kedua), the document is a statement by four Darul Islam leaders, comprised of three points: (1) a reaffirmation of the first 1962 Joint Declaration and a pledge of loyalty to the Indonesian Republic; (2) a resolution to not enter or affiliate with a political party—

a clause that would preclude affiliation with any group other than Golkar, which the regime classified as above party politics; and (3) an affirmation of willingness to remain under the aegis of and to become a force for the government. The statement, dated October 28, 1970, was signed in Bandung by Danu Mohammad Hasan, Hadji Zainoel Abidin, Ateng Djaelani Setiawan, and one of Kartosoewirjo’s sons, Tahmid Rahmat Basuki.  

In the trial of another Darul Islam leader, one of the signatories, Ateng, would later testify that the Second Declaration was the brainchild of Pitut Soeharto, Ali Moertopo’s Opsus officer responsible for operations involving Islamic organisations.

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Second, in 1971 Danu Muhammad Hasan hosted Darul Islam’s first post-Kartosoewirjo reunion at his residence on Gang Madrosah in Bandung. Danu made no secret of the fact that he worked for the state intelligence agency Bakin, and even persuaded others to allow the agency to sponsor the event. Senior figures leading the revival spoke at the event, including Djaja Sudjadi and a leader from Central Java, Haji Ismail Pranoto, known as Hispran. According to one account, 250,000 rupiah was made available for the function not by Bakin but by Opsus.

The reunion was a great success in recreating a sense of community among Darul Islam militants. Hundreds of members attended from across the country over three days from April 24–26. It was also a success for the regime, which sought to co-opt the movement in support of Golkar at the upcoming national elections on July 3, 1971. Two members of the military establishment were there to monitor activities: Colonel Dadang of the Siliwangi Command and Colonel Pitut Soeharto of Opsus. In a 2001 interview with Darul Islam Magazine, Ridwan, who was a member of the reunion committee, addressed the charge that at the 1971 reunion Darul Islam had been co-opted by the Suharto regime. He claimed that the arrangement was meant to be mutually beneficial.

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159 Evidence (item No. 6) in case No. 20/1978 Pid. Subv., terdakwa Haji Ismail Pranoto bin Haji Soelaiman, Pengadilan Negeri Surabaya (hereafter Hispran case).
160 Ateng Djaelani, court testimony in Hispran case.
163 Interview with Ridwan by Al Chaidar, October 8, 1999.
– So this means the NII [Islamic State of Indonesia] was being used by intelligence?
– Yes. Even Pitut Suharto attended then and gave a speech entitled “NII Supports Golkar.” Thus, since then it has been popular to say that the NII was used by Bakin.
– If it is clear they were being used, why did the mujahideen stay quiet?
– Actually, from the beginning we wanted to use Bakin. We needed support for the movement. We didn’t have funding, and support from the Muslim community [ummat] was less than total, so at the time we used Bakin.
– What about the mujahideen, didn’t they protest?
– No one protested. Because at that time we saw Bakin as a protector and as an aid to security.

From 1971 Danu Muhaamad Hasan’s residence on Gang Madrosah would become the unofficial headquarters of the Darul Islam revival, hosting numerous meetings and swearing-in ceremonies. How did the New Order regime co-opt a weak but rebellious movement like Darul Islam so easily? Part of the answer is that this was the politics of manipulation and patronage in which intelligence chief Ali Moertopo was an expert. It also appears that Moertopo had gained some trust within the movement by suggesting that he himself was a Darul Islam sympathizer. Such a claim, however unlikely, appears to have rested on Moertopo’s former role as a fighter with the Hizbullah guerrilla army during the revolution. The precise nature of Moertopo’s relationship with Hizbullah is unclear, but his identification with the group was part of the public image he cultivated at the time. Moertopo may have further bolstered his credibility with Darul Islam by allowing it to be believed he would ultimately support Indonesia becoming an Islamic state.\(^{164}\) Later, in a speech as Information Minister at the opening of a mosque in 1980, Moertopo addressed these impressions and clarified his position on Darul Islam. He said it is true that he was a member of Hizbullah, but he claimed that this fact had been “exploited by some people.”

Yes, of course: because he is a child of Hizbullah he must agree with an Islamic state. But if you want to know, at the time of the “Proclamation of the Islamic State” in the jungle near the West Java/Central Java border, I was the only one who raised his voice at the proclamation ceremony. Amir Fattah was still alive, Gozali was still alive, they were all still alive.

I said: “I do not agree!” I followed the Republic which I proclaimed; I don’t want to be involved in an Islamic state.\(^\text{165}\)

Moertopo went on to warn that turning Indonesia into an Islamic state would not bring peace to the country but would spark civil war among rival factions. “As long as people still think of Islam as a political force,” he concludes, “this world will not be safe.”

Moertopo’s main agenda in sponsoring the Darul Islam was to use the group to engineer a victory for Golkar in the general elections of July 3, 1971. Many in the government, including Moertopo, were pessimistic about Golkar’s prospects at what would be the first general elections since Suharto had seized power in 1966. The electoral vehicle lacked a genuine support base and faced strong opposition from the traditionalist Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, Revival of the Religious Scholars).

Moertopo’s strategy, therefore, was to erode the NU vote by establishing a Golkar-affiliated group that would appeal directly to NU’s traditionalist Muslim constituency. To do this he co-opted a small and obscure Muslim group, the Islamic Education Advancement League (GUPPI, Gabungan Usaha Perbaikan Pendidikan Islam), an association formed in 1950 in West Java to foster *pesantren* education. In the early 1970s, under the guidance of close Moertopo associate, Soedjono Hoemardani, GUPPI transformed itself from a moribund collaboration of several West Java *pesantren* to a Jakarta-based, nationwide network led by K. H. Sjarifuddin Mohammad Amin, an NU-affiliated chairman of the religious education directorate in the Department of Religious Affairs.

In mid-1970, Pitut Suharto was tasked to co-opt Muslim leaders into GUPPI. According to research by Indonesian scholar Heru Cahyono, the operation was backed by large financial rewards that would be offered to those who were prepared to cooperate with the regime. It appears that significant sums of money were made available through the Opsus network to certain figures as inducements to join GUPPI. Cahyono shows how some of the most influential *kyai* (scholar–teachers) in Java were bought off in this way. For example, K.H. Tarmudzim, a *kyai* from East Java who ran a number of schools, had initially refused to support Golkar. But he reversed his position after GUPPI offered funding to help develop his schools. Tarmudzim was given funding in the order of fifty

million rupiah— US$128,205 at the exchange rate of the time. K.H. Ali Maksum, a kyai who ran a prominent pesantren of eight hundred students in Yogyakarta, received fourteen million rupiah. K.H. Musta’in Romly, the principal of one of Java’s largest pesantren, was given fifty million rupiah, along with special credit from the regional government for the development of his pesantren. According to Cahyono, business associates of Soedjono Hoemardani and Ali Moertopo were the sources of such largesse. Based on interviews with GUPPI Secretary-General Djamhari and Pitut Suharto, in a footnote Cahyono gives a glimpse of how the Opsus operation involving GUPPI worked:

GUPPI was a very rich organization. Aside from funds received through official requests for government assistance, GUPPI received funds that were attained by Soedjono himself. [These funds] were of a large amount and greatly exceeded official government assistance. GUPPI was able to benefit from Soedjono’s special relationship with Japanese investors. Aside from this, contributions could appear spontaneously from Soedjono’s “business associates,” friends, or national businessmen. Through the influence of the power that was so greatly associated with the Soedjono–Ali Moertopo duo, GUPPI could even attain assistance from the governor, for example, in making available transportation.

Although there are few details of Darul Islam followers’ involvement in GUPPI, Pitut Suharto conceded to Cahyono that the former militants did play a role. Pitut claimed that in part the GUPPI operation was directed at countering radical tendencies within the Muslim community. Cahyono paraphrases the rationale at the time:

In order that there not be a recurrence of the Islamic radicalism that until now has haunted Indonesian political history, a better approach needs to be found ... Therefore an Islamic organization must be cultivated that can sustain Islamic aspirations from the various existing streams and subsequently be led in a direction that is more modern.

Before he died in 2011, Pitut gave another rare account of his cooptation of Darul Islam elements to Tempo magazine. According to Tempo, “In 1969 he [Pitut] was recruited to Special Operations and BAKIN. His task was to ‘neutralize’ NII [Islamic State of

167 Ibid., 120-121.
168 Ibid., 90.
Indonesia] members. The aim was to entice the moderates into supporting the New Order and to crush those who resisted.” His method, according to the article, was to infiltrate the group via Danu Muhammad Hasan, and to distribute money to buy influence.\(^{169}\)

The regime’s sponsorship of the Darul Islam revival perhaps represents Indonesia’s first ever attempt to “deradicalize” religious extremists. Through GUPPI, Ali Moertopo sought not only to turn Darul Islam members into loyal supporters of Golkar, but also to inculcate in them values of tolerance. This objective was evident at GUPPI’s first national conference under regime patronage on January 28, 1971, at which a welcome address was given by Soedjono Humardani, and an endorsement by the minister of religion, K.H. Moh. Dahlan. Inevitably, Ali Moertopo was on the schedule, speaking on the subject of “The Role of Religious Scholars in the Success of Development and Elections.”\(^{170}\) But GUPPI Ulama were also treated to stultifying speeches by pro-regime Ulama and senior regime officials on the subject of “tolerance”, with titles such as “Religious Tolerance in Islam and the Dual Function of the Armed Forces,” by Prof. Dr. H. Aboebakar Atjeh,\(^{171}\) and, “The Role of Religious Scholars in Cultivating Religious Tolerance and the Participation of Religious Scholars in Defense and National Security,” by Lieutenant General Darjatmo. In the latter speech, after expounding on the meaning of “tolerance”, Darjatmo urged his audience to remember President Suharto’s wise words in 1969 on the commemoration of the Prophet’s birthday (Maulid Nabi), that “we must cast far away attitudes of enmity, prejudice, and suspicion and replace them with mutual respect.” Still, as Darjatmo argued, it is our mutual obligation to face the “primary enemy of the religious, that is, the remnants of atheists/PKI, who continue to be a latent danger to the Indonesian community.”\(^{172}\)

There is no better example of how Opsus patronage of Darul Islam went awry than in the story of one key recruit from this period, Haji Ismail Pranoto, known as Hispran.

Hispran was a senior Darul Islam commander famous for being one of the last insurgents to descend from the mountains in Central Java in 1967 with a small band of Darul Islam soldiers. Instead of surrendering, Hispran had gone on the run in Sumatra, avoiding any compromise with the government. Hispran was a speaker at the regime-sponsored 1971 reunion and became closely associated with Danu Muhammad Hasan and the Opsus operation to engineer support for Golkar. But under the cover of working for Golkar at the behest of Ali Moertopo, he was also busy recruiting a new generation of militants to Darul Islam. So central was he to the Darul Islam revival of the 1970s that his role is often described in court documents of the time as that of the “link” or “liason” (penghubung). Fatefully, before he would be arrested on subversion charges towards the end of the 1970s, Hispran had recruited the two future founders of Jemaah Islamiyah, Abdullah Sunkgar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir. He personally introduced the two to the Darul Islam community, facilitating meetings between them and Tahmid Kartosoewirjo, a prominent son of the founder of the Islamic State.\(^\text{173}\) The New Order regime could not have anticipated that, as an indirect result of its machinations, it would help to bridge the traditional millenarian jihadism of Indonesia and the modern salafi jihadism of the Middle East.

Hispran was recruited into GUPPI as a “pembina” (manager–trainer) on February 18, 1971—only weeks after GUPPI had officially been made into a Golkar organization.\(^\text{174}\) In accordance with the Second Declaration, Darul Islam members were to support Golkar in the elections, and Hispran, in his trial testimony, claimed that he had been only a loyal servant of the state. He also described his recruitment by Pitut Soeharto:

> In the month of October, 1970, that is to say at the time of the Second Declaration done in Bandung by friends H. Danu Moh. Hasan, H. Ateng Djaelani, Abidin, and Tahmid, I was called to Bandung to meet these friends whom until then I had known by name only, and Colonel Pitut Suharto. Because Point 2 of the declaration prohibited the joining of a political party, it was suggested by Colonel Pitut Suharto [that we should] join Golkar. Because we were aware that Golkar aimed to fulfil the Revolution of 17 August 1945, we agreed. Then, after that, we returned to Brebes with the Second Declaration document, and we reported to KODIM [Komando Distrik Militer, District Military Command] Brebes,

\(^\text{173}\) Interview with Tahmid Kartosoewirjo, September 21, 2009.

\(^\text{174}\) Evidence (item no. 20) in Hispran case.
then we were invited to join Golkar in the form of GUPPI and also invited to join the campaign in Central Java and West Java.\textsuperscript{175}

Hispran described his role in GUPPI as that of a preacher (\textit{mubalig}) and said that at the invitation of GUPPI he had given sermons across Java, presumably urging his audience to vote Golkar.\textsuperscript{176}

Consistent with the New Order’s organicist philosophy, which conceived of every section of society as an integral part of one harmonious “family”, GUPPI was just one of an array Golkar-linked corporatist bodies designed, often with direct Moertopo intervention, to immobilize opposition to the regime by forcing disparate political elements into government-controlled umbrella organizations.\textsuperscript{177} Darul Islam was one of many socio-political groups targeted by Moertopo and his intelligence operatives for infiltration and manipulation, a program so broad one of his former associates has described it as “overkill.”\textsuperscript{178} Compiling a sort of Ali Moertopo “hit list” from 1971, \textit{Tempo Magazine} claims in the lead up to the elections he, with Opsus, was responsible for the “conditioning” (\textit{penggalangan}) of more than two hundred organisations, including political parties, labour unions, and associations of teachers, students and journalists.\textsuperscript{179}

But his work was also part of a particular regime agenda to neutralise the threat of political Islam. At the same time as Moertopo was co-opting Darul Islam he was also interfering in the mainstream Islamic opposition party, Parmusi (Partai Muslimin Indonesia), in order to block leaders critical of the regime and promote others who were compliant. During the New Order, just as the PKI, main leftist opposition party, was banned, so was Masyumi, the main Islamist party. Parmusi, meant to be the inheritor of Masyumi’s constituency, was so thoroughly undermined that it would poll less than six per cent of the vote in 1971, a fraction of Masyumi’s previous electoral strength. Moertopo was instrumental in the operation to subdue Parmusi with the insertion of his

\textsuperscript{175} Haji Ismail Pranoto, court testimony in Hispran case.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{177} For the definitive account of New Order organicism, see David Bourchier, \textit{Illicitar Democracy in Indonesia: The Ideology of the family state} (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

\textsuperscript{178} Interview with Harry Tjan Silalahi, Jakarta, April 8, 2008.

protégé, Joni Naro, as leader of the party in 1970, after the regime had rejected the party’s independently chosen leaders. As David Bourchier summarises the regime’s attitude to Islam at the time:

Theocratic Islam had always worried Soeharto and his predominantly abangan and Christian advisers and officer corps. There was a widely held assumption among the ruling group that Muslims would use any purchase on power to press for an Islamic state, or at least for the implementation of the Jakarta Charter requiring the state to enforce Muslim religious obligations on believers. Fear of Islamic aspirations had been behind the extensive measures taken in the late 1960s and early 1970s to marginalise and incapacitate the Muslim parties.

There was another reason why a militant movement like Darul Islam was useful to the regime. The New Order, it has been observed, had a complex relationship with Indonesia’s underworld, often exploiting politically or legally compromised figures to do regime dirty work. As Ian Wilson argues, during the New Order, gangsters had a “symbiotic relationship” with the military and political elite, and “were allowed to carry out their activities, e.g., protection rackets and control over a particular localized sector of the economy, in return for a cut of the profits that would make its way through the various levels of the state bureaucracy. Violence and criminality were normalized as state practice.”

Witness the now disgraced former Governor of North Sumatra, who while in office told filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer in *The Act of Killing*, “We have so many gangsters and that’s a good thing. They want the freedom to do things, even if they are wrong. But if we know who to work with them, all we have to do is direct them.”

Key Darul Islam figures were beneficiaries of the New Order patronage system. Ken Conboy, a Jakarta-based security consultant with direct access to intelligence circles, dates New Order patronage of Darul Islam as far back as 1969 when Opsus arranged for Darul Islam leaders to receive kerosene distribution rights in Java in return for support

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183 Joshua Oppenheimer (Director) & Signe Byrge Sorensen (Producer), *The Act of Killing* (Denmark: Final Cut for Real, 2012).
for Golkar. According to Conboy, Ateng Djaelani, the veteran Darul Islam commander who signed both Joint Declarations, was “ultimately placed in charge of the kerosene network allocated by Moertopo.”\textsuperscript{184} From 1973, until the Komando Jihad affair broke in 1976, Ateng served as the West Java general chairman of Gapermigas, the Golkar-affiliated union of private oil and gas traders. Another recipient of kerosene contracts was Adah Djaelani (no relation to Ateng), a West Java Darul Islam commander who had signed the first Joint Declaration in 1962 but rebuffed the second. Adah was director of the kerosene distribution company PT Sawo 11.\textsuperscript{185} Hispran, in his trial, testified openly to the patronage he and other Darul Islam leaders, including Ateng, had received from the government: Danu Mohammad Hasan was given a jeep and a driver, presumably the same jeep that, according to rumour, Danu was given in the 1960s to hunt communists. Hispran claimed he himself had received building contracts for his Brebes-based company, CV Sadar. Hispran also claimed to have received a three million rupiah grant from Danu Mohammad Hasan for the building of a school.\textsuperscript{186}

Moertopo’s cultivation of Darul Islam and other groups in the lead up to the New Order’s first general election appears to have been a success. Golkar won the election with a landslide 62.8 per cent of the vote. The largest Muslim party, Nahdlatul Ulama, had been successfully contained, coming in second with 18.67 per cent. Parmusi was devastated, gaining only 5.36 percent of the vote.\textsuperscript{187} Both Moertopo and his operative Pitut Suharto consolidated their positions within the Golkar executive, with Pitut made “secretary for spiritual matters and culture.”\textsuperscript{188} Moertopo would later credit the victory to the vast machinery of the state, including the military, ABRI, and the civil service, KORPRI, which were both required to support Golkar. But he also nodded towards his more underhand methods:

Some circles are of the opinion that the triumph of Golkar was achieved due to the following factors: the availability of funds, the support of

\textsuperscript{186} Haji Ismail Pranoto, court testimony in Hispran case.
\textsuperscript{187} Ken Ward, \textit{The 1971 Election in Indonesia: An East Java Case Study} (Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1974), 160.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 181.
officers, particularly from ABRI, the formation of KORPRI within various ministries, institutions and firms, and also various forms of intimidation. All of this contributed to the triumph of Golkar. In 1973 the space for Muslim political parties shrank further still with the imposition of a two-party system of political opposition. All Islamic parties were forcibly subsumed under the state-controlled United Development Party (PPP), which was dominated, as Parmusi had been, by the Ali Moertopo agent Joni Naro. The year also marked the first open confrontation between the regime and political Islam, when two bills were introduced into parliament, one that would have forced Muslims to be subject to a secular marriage law, removing jurisdiction from the religious courts, and a second that would have prevented the PPP from outwardly identifying itself as an Islamic party. But the government backed down on these measures after widespread public outcry and a parliamentary walk out staged by Muslim politicians, the first open defiance of the regime in that place since Suharto came to power.

It was around the same time, in the early 1970s, that the regime developed a worldview in which it saw itself as occupying the ideologically moderate middle ground, fending off extremists on both the left and the right. In the coded demonology of the New Order, the Indonesian state was at threat from the extreme right (ekstrem kanan), referring to Islamists, and the extreme left (ekstrem kiri), referring to communists. From 1973 onwards this demonology, sometimes abbreviated in Indonesian as eka-eki, was mirrored in election ballot papers, on which Golkar always featured at the centre as number two on the ballot, with the Muslim PPP on the left and the secular nationalist PDI on the right. The origins of the binary opposition, however, can be traced at least as far back as 1972, when Ali Moertopo, in the seminal New Order treatise The Acceleration and Modernization of 25 Years’ Development, wrote of the Indonesian military that it is “a fact of history that the armed forces are the guardians and defenders of Pancasila from all kinds of deviation and attempts to undermine it either by the extreme right or extreme left.”

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190 Bourchier, Illiberal Democracy, 180.
the communists had been exterminated, however, the more this demonology might have been interpreted as a veiled threat against the only opposition group left standing, i.e., the Islamists.

Nevertheless, the state-sponsored revival of Darul Islam continued unabated. The Islamic State of Indonesia now had the opportunity to appoint its first imam since Kartosoewirjo. This development was the culmination of months of diplomacy and negotiation. Several leaders, including Hispran, had traveled to Aceh to urge Daud Beureu’eh to consider accepting the position. In September 1973, six key leaders met in Jakarta in a house on Jalan Mahoni owned by Romli Yakub, a former Darul Islam leader from South Sulawesi.192 Between them they represented the three command areas (Komando Perang Wilayah Besar) of Darul Islam’s operations—Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Java-Madura. Sumatra was represented by Gaos Taufik, Sulawesi by Ali A. T., and Java-Madura by Adah Djaelani. Kartosoewirjo’s former bodyguard, Aceng Kurnia, was also present, as was one of Kartosoewirjo’s sons, Dodo Mohammad Darda, and Daud Beureu’eh himself. In a historic move a simple command structure was created and Daud Beureu’eh was installed as the new imam of the Islamic State of Indonesia.193

But not all Darul Islam leaders agreed with reviving the movement under state sponsorship. Two prominent men, Djaja Sujadi and Kadar Solihat, had from the outset resisted moves that they saw as compromising Darul Islam by becoming too close to the New Order authorities. At the 1971 reunion in Bandung they had opposed Opsus sponsorship.194 In 1975 they broke ties with the Darul Islam mainstream to form a breakaway group, Djaja Sujadi anointing himself imam. The Sujadi faction styled itself on the doctrine of what they termed *jihad fillah*, meaning non-violent jihad. This was in opposition to the faction led by Adah Djaelani, which did not eschew violence and followed the traditional Darul Islam doctrine of *jihad fisabilillah* or “jihad in the way of God.”

192 Gaos Taufik, interrogation deposition in Hispran case.
In 1975 Djaja Sujadi wrote a treatise titled “Notes on Jihad” in which he argued that, before Kartosoewirjo was captured in 1962 the imam had given the order for “jihad fillah” subsequent to his final command ordering his troops to surrender. But by Qur’anic analogy, Sudjadi made it clear that non-violent jihad was a temporary change of strategy until Darul Islam was in a stronger position. He explained that “Jihad Fillah obtained in the early period of Mecca, that is, in a place in which there was no separation between safe areas and infidel areas, between right and wrong, between friend and foe. Thus the base of God’s truth and justice became what was kept within by every Mujahidin personally.” Thus it was a stance taken for the safety of the faithful during a time of “jahiliyah, injustice and idolatry”. Like Aceng Kurnia, Sudjadi cited the Qur’anic precedent of the Hudaibiyah Agreement to argue for a period of rebuilding. “Behind the defeat”, he wrote, “the Hudaibiyah agreement gave room and opportunity for the prophet to make preparations to continue to struggle, primarily in order to achieve victory over Mecca.”

Nevertheless, most Darul Islam leaders were less cautious and continued to reconsolidate the Islamic State under the cover of working for Opsus. In December 1975, a meeting was called at the house of Danu Mohammad Hasan to receive Gaos Taufik from Sumatra. There Taufik, acting as envoy for Daud Beureu’eh, delivered a written order by Beureu’eh, acting as imam, to form a fighting front, or Barisan fi Sabilillah. Ateng Djaelani, who had read the letter, described the order as one that called for the organization to

... immediately form a Barisan fi Sabilillah in accordance with the Islamic State of Indonesia statement No. 1/KPSI, complete with personnel. In hope that God Almighty blesses all our efforts towards the ideal of victory for the Islamic State of Indonesia.

Danu Mohammad Hasan spurred these efforts by claiming that Ali Moertopo was supporting them and would provide weapons for troops if Darul Islam first organized its

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198 Ateng Djaelani, interrogation deposition in Dodo case.
personnel. Ridwan recalls they were told, “what’s important is that we prepare the organizational structure as fully as possible.”

During this period Darul Islam militants remained captured by their past as a millenarian-inspired nationalist insurgency. They continued to organise as representatives of an Islamic State seeking to control its rightful territory, despite that fact that the war was over and the New Order military apparatus enjoyed near-complete control. Consequently, the leadership structure they sought to put in place mirrored the territorial command structure of the Republic, and drew heavily from traditional Darul Islam areas in Java. At the top of the structure was Daud Beureu’eh as Imam and all-Indonesia Military Commander (Komandan Perang Seluruh Indonesia, KPSI). The top territorial command level was the Greater Region War Command (Komando Perang Wilayah Besar, KPWB), consisting of Java (and Madura), Sulawesi, and Sumatra. Most new positions in the command hierarchy appear to have been created in Java (known as KPWB I), where the 1976 recruiting was focused, to the relative neglect of Sulawesi (KPWB II) and Sumatra (KPWB III). The Commander (Panglima) of Java was Danu Mohammad Hasan. The Deputy Commander was Hispran. At the provincial level were nine Regional Commands (Komandan Wilayah, KW). The commander for Central Java (KW II) was Hispran. His deputy was a new recruit with a background in the Hizbullah militia during the revolution, Haji Faleh. One of Faleh’s sons, later known as Abu Rusydan, would emerge in the 1990s as a member of Jemaah Islamiyah, and go on to serve as its de facto leader post-Abu Bakar Ba’asyir.

In Hispran’s activities, also, we see just how focused the Darul Islam revival was on re-establishing its territory, as a hierarchical and centralised state, despite how vulnerable to detection and arrest this approach left the movement. In Central and East Java, Hispran attempted to recruit office bearers to form an Islamic State structure at all levels below the provincial, drawing on old Darul Islam and Hizbullah contacts. Representatives or commanders were sought at the district (kabupaten), subdistrict (kecamatan), and village (desa) level. Most new recruits were sent to be formally inducted at Danu Mohammad Hasan’s house in Bandung, which was referred to as the

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199 Interview with Ridwan, Bandung, December 14, 2006.

200 Temby, “Imagining an Islamic State,” 16.
“center” (pusat).201 There, often in the presence of Hispran and other Darul Islam leaders, recruits would recite an oath (bai’at) that they willing to sacrifice their body and soul to

defend the existence of the Islamic State of Indonesia in order that Islamic Law applies comprehensively and most broadly among the Islamic Community of the Indonesian Nation in Indonesia.202

When Hispran was eventually arrested for attempting to re-establish the Islamic state, one of the objects in his possession was a typescript of the Islamic State oath of allegiance. He was also found in possession of an old typescript of a statement released on September 7, 1950, by Kartosoewirjo as Imam of the government of the Islamic State of Indonesia. The document lays out one of the leader’s more extreme visions, providing guidance in the case of an anticipated World War III and global revolution. It is perhaps the same vision that motivated Hispran to fight for the Islamic State despite it being under New Order “occupation”. Kartosoewirjo states that as others powers sought to establish themselves amid the chaos and conflict, it would be obligatory for Muslims to wage jihad to consolidate the Islamic State of Indonesia, even if this meant starting from a negara basis (Madinah Indonesia), or further still, an Islamic Government (Daulatul-Islamiyah). In the case that neither are achieved, however, Kartosoewirjo states that Muslims are forbidden from living under the occupation of another state with a system other than Islamic law and should therefore “exterminate all the infidels until they are eradicated and the State Granted by God is firmly established on Indonesian land. Or die a martyr in Holy War!”203

Komando Jihad

It was only towards the end of the 1970s that the state-sponsored revival of Darul Islam began to produce unintended consequences for the New Order. After a number of small-scale attacks by militants, and amid concern within the military that Ali Moertopo had lost control of Darul Islam, the regime’s peak internal security apparatus, known as

201 Haji Ismail Pranoto, interrogation deposition in Hispran case; and Moch. Syamsudin Marzuki, interrogation deposition in Hispran case.
202 Evidence (item no. 2) in Hispran case.
Kopkamtib, began a crackdown on the militants, who were often accused of being members of a group the regime called “Komando Jihad”. Although critics of the regime suspected that Komando Jihad was a fabrication, the name can in fact be traced to Gaos Taufik, an old Darul Islam leader who had recruited a small group of young men in Sumatera for an operation by that name. Darul Islam members outside Sumatra did not recognize the name when they were later labelled with it by the authorities, but in interrogations for the Hispran trial in 1978, Taufik and his followers made frequent mention of Komando Jihad. In his unpublished memoirs written in 2000, West Javanese Darul Islam leader Kang Edi is adamant that Komando Jihad was not the product of government manipulation, explaining it this way:

The Komando Jihad incident is often said to be [the result of] a manipulation by Ali Moertopo. At the meeting between Gaos Taufik and Danu Mohammad Hasan, there was an agreement to organize a revolution under the order of the second Imam of the Islamic State of Indonesia. So there was no involvement by Ali Moertopo in the Komando Jihad movement in Sumatra.204

Taufik had started recruiting militants in the early 1970s. One of those he inducted into Darul Islam who had no prior family background in the movement was Timsar Zubil, who he tasked to carry out acts of sabotage against the regime. Timsar would later describe these attacks as “shock therapy” for what he saw as a dissolute New Order society.205 By 1975, Komando Jihad comprised around eight men, including Timsar, under the command of an elder member, Agus Sulaeman. In early 1975 six of the men travelled to Jakarta to undergo a fifteen-day crash course in bomb-making at the home of a Darul Islam veteran from Sulawesi, arranged by Ali A. T. On his return to Medan, Timsar Zubil procured explosives for his planned attacks by tapping into the Darul Islam network and finding a supplier in Abdul Qadir Baraja, a Darul Islam veteran based in Lampung.206

Also in 1975, the Komando Jihad militants attempted to garner foreign support for their jihad via a connection in Malaysia. Although this episode prefigures the networking that

205 Interview with Timsar Zubil, Jakarta, November 25, 2006.
206 Timsar Zubil, interrogation deposition in Hispran case.
would occur in the 1980s and lead to a regional jihadist assemblage, in the 1970s the focus was solely on gaining material support for the Islamic State of Indonesia. As such, the Malaysian expedition was carried out like a diplomatic mission. A two-man delegation of Rifai Ahmad (the Lampung representative of Hispran’s company, CV Sadar) and Dainuri Saleh travelled to Malaysia to request support from the Libyan embassy.\footnote{Haji Ismail Pranoto, interrogation deposition in Hispran case.} The delegation was followed separately by a visit from Islamic State imam Daud Beureu’eh, bearing a letter in Arabic addressed to Libyan president Muammar Qaddafi. According to Dainuri Saleh, the letter, conceived by Gaos Taufik but signed by Daud Beureu’eh as imam, referred to the “DI/TII struggle since 1949 until now to uphold the establishment of Islamic Law and the Islamic State of Indonesia” and requested “material and financial aid, especially firearms.”\footnote{Dainuri Saleh, interrogation deposition in Hispran case.} Rifai Ahmad would later testify that they had hoped Libya would grant them 300,000 modern weapons, valued at US $12 billion—a loan that was to have been repaid “after the Islamic State of Indonesia had gained independence through destroying the communists.”\footnote{“Saksi Rivai Ahmad Ungkapkan Minta Bantuan Senjata Libia,” \textit{Pikiran Rakyat}, January 18, 1978.} The delegation also sought the help of Daud Beureu’eh’s Malaysian grandson-in-law, Sanusi Juned, a London-educated banker and prominent activist in the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), who later became minister for agriculture in the Mahathir government. But at a meeting with the delegation in a mosque in Penang, Juned rejected Darul Islam requests and the basis that certain conditions for aid were not yet satisfied, one of which was civil unrest in Indonesia.\footnote{Dainuri Saleh, interrogation deposition in Hispran case.}

After the failure of the Malaysian option, the operatives raised funds locally by robbing a number of businesses in Sumatra. Then they began their acts of sabotage. In June 1976, one Komando Jihad member, Anwar Jeri, threw a grenade during a Qur’an reading competition in North Sumatra, with the aim of creating tension between the Muslim and Christian communities. The grenade failed to detonate.\footnote{Anwar Jeri, interrogation deposition in Hispran case.} Following this, the Komando Jihad militants carried out a number of small-scale bombing operations in North and West Sumatra. Timsar Zubil coordinated operations to bomb the Immanuel
Hospital, a Baptist hospital in Bukittinggi, and the Nurul Iman mosque in Padang, the latter seen as a target because it was built by the government. The Immanuel bomb failed to explode and was discovered by hospital staff. The mosque bomb, however, exploded on November 11, damaging the building only. On Christmas Day, synchronized bombings were carried out in Medan targeting two churches (one Methodist, the other Catholic), a cinema, and a bar. It is unclear if there were any casualties in these attacks; Timsar Zubil claims that they were designed only to shock the government into action against the growth of sinful behavior during the New Order.

Although the bombings inflicted few casualties, Komando Jihad would come to symbolise for the New Order the zombie-like return of the existential threat of Darul Islam and the “extreme right.” Around the time of the bombings the Indonesian military’s territorial command in Java began to take action against what they feared was a revitalised Darul Islam, broken free of its Opsus masters. Acting on intelligence reports about recruitment activities, and concerned about the security of the 1977 general election, Siliwangi commander Himawan Soetanto sent out a letter of invitation to Darul Islam leaders to attend a meeting at Siliwangi headquarters in Bandung on November 1, 1976. Soetanto sought to remind them of their commitments to support the Republic and the Pancasila under the terms of the 1962 Joint Declaration and to provide guidance to the Darul Islam community “so that they would not make a return to extremism.” Soetanto was surprised by how well the meeting was attended, taking it as proof that Darul Islam survived as a community. He was further surprised that Hispran himself attended the meeting, given Hispran’s reputation as one of the more aggressive Darul Islam veterans. Hispran, for his part, denied he had been organising against the state. Indicative of the double lives some Darul Islam revivalists at the time were living—as both clients of regime and fighters for an Islamic state—when Hispran was eventually arrested he was found carrying both the Darul Islam documents he appeared

212 Timsar Zubil, interrogation deposition in Hispran case file; and Dainuri Saleh, interrogation deposition in Hispran case file.
216 Interview with Himawan Soetanto, Jakarta, July 25, 2007
to be using in his recruitment drive (the oath, the KartosoeWirjo statement) and key Siliwangi documents, including the November 1 invitation letter.\footnote{Evidence in Hispran case.}

The following year, Hispran was arrested on January 8 on one of his recruitment drives in East Java. Apparently Siliwangi and the other territorial commands were not convinced that Opsus had full control of Darul Islam and, with the spectre of Komando Jihad looming over the upcoming elections, the scene was set for a security crackdown. By this time also, two former Darul Islam leaders close to the Siliwangi command who were known for their early surrender and betrayal of the movement in 1962, Ateng Djaelani and Zaenal Abidin, had reported the revival to the Siliwangi commander.\footnote{Ateng Djaelani, interrogation deposition in Dodo case.} Timsar Zubil was arrested shortly after Hispran. In June, Chief of the Kopkamtib, Admiral Sudomo, reported that seven hundred arrests of Komando Jihad suspects had been made.\footnote{David Jenkins, \textit{Suharto and His Generals: Indonesian Military Politics 1975–1983} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1984), 58.}

The cost to younger militants, like Timsar Zubil, of working with Darul Islam veterans who were compromised by their association with the regime, would not be lost on subsequent generations of Indonesian jihadists. But Darul Islam was also compromised by its failure to adapt to New Order Indonesia, in which it was no longer possible to survive as a territorially based insurgency. What we see in the 1970s revival is a still highly territorialised movement, localised in the traditional Darul Islam areas of rural Java, Sumatra and South Sulawesi. Darul Islam’s ability to conjure its revolutionary nationalist past as Indonesia’s original and sovereign Islamic state-in-waiting was (and remains) its main strength. However, its preoccupation with territory and hierarchy made it an easy target for the Suharto regime. Indeed, the spectre of a “shadow state” or “state within a state”, appears to have been one of the most intriguing and alarming aspects of the revival to the military authorities at the time. One exchange between Hispran and his interrogators is illustrative of this concern:

\begin{quote}
Is it true that with the formation of tools or instruments that represent a body or institution, that is to say, a Prime Minister ... Internal Affairs Minister ... Chief of the Java and Madura Command ... along with your...
\end{quote}
formation of the leadership for Commands in the areas of Kediri and Bojonegoro, along with District Commands in Lamongan, Tuban, Nganjuk, Blitar ... that it means an already established Shadow State, the Islamic State of Indonesia?
[Hispran:] Yes, that’s correct.
In other words, established a State within a State?
[Hispran:] Yes, that’s correct.²²⁰

The Komando Jihad arrests have often been interpreted by observers of New Order Indonesia as another example of the regime manufacturing a false threat as a pretext to punish its political enemies. Indeed, raising the spectre of militant Islam was a convenient way for the regime to stigmatize Muslim opponents and political Islam more generally. The timing of the arrests, in the approach to the 1977 general election, contributed to the sense of public suspicion. As Damien Kingsbury in his Politics of Indonesia observes, “It was widely believed that the Komando Jihad did not actually exist, but was a fabrication by the armed forces for the purposes of tightening its political control.”²²¹ But even at the time the government was, in fact, prepared to admit that the label they were using was a potential source of confusion. As Tempo magazine noted, “Komando Jihad, according to [Attorney General] Ali Said, is actually a term for a variety of extremist movements whose membership is led by former leaders of Darul Islam/Islamic Army of Indonesia.”²²²

The mass arrests of so-called Komando Jihad suspects was the biggest setback for Darul Islam since 1962 and would remain the largest government operation against militant Islamists until the arrests of Jemaah Islamiyah suspects following the Bali bombings of 2002. They would also set the background for an even more repressive period to come in the 1980s. But the arrests and trials were also a major setback for political Islam and peaceful Muslim opposition to the regime. Coming in the late 1970s, they marked the first widespread repression of political Islam during the New Order, the culmination of years of tension between the secular military regime and its Muslim critics. Hundreds of people, perhaps up to one thousand suspected Muslim extremists, were arrested, many of them with no connection to Darul Islam. In a 1985 statement, Amnesty International wrote:

²²⁰ Haji Ismail Pranoto, interrogation deposition in Hispran case.
²²² “Mereka Minta Penjelasan,” Tempo, April 18, 1981.
It is believed that blanket accusation of involvement in Komando Jihad may have been used by the Indonesian government to detain many Muslim activists who merely had been critical of the government’s policies and voiced their discontent without using or advocating violence.223

The demonstration by the regime that it was prepared to treat the “extreme right” with the same severity that it dealt with the “extreme left” was a credible and powerful threat to mainstream Muslim society. Not only were Muslims activists lumped together with their communist rivals, they were subject to the very same unfair legal process. Just as with the communists, the Komando Jihad detainees were arrested by Kopkamtib, the military command that had been established to lead the crackdown on the communists just days after the coup, on October 10, 1965. Just as with the communists who were not summarily executed, Kopkamtib arrested and deposed the Komando Jihad detainees, before they were placed on trial under Indonesia’s 1963 anti-subversion law. As Amnesty International described it in a 1997 report, “The Anti-subversion Law is the harshest of the repressive legislation available to the Indonesian Government to silence its alleged opponents.” Under the law cases were easy to bring given the vague wording of the legislation, which criminalised anything deemed to run counter to Pancasila ideology and the 1945 constitution. Sentencing provisions ranged from life in prison to death. As Amnesty International explains in a paper on the subversion law, acquittals were extremely rare:

Subversion trials routinely fall short of international standards for fair trials. In most cases they are little more than show trials. Fundamental to this is the lack of independence of the judiciary in Indonesia…. Even where the system provides formal guarantees of autonomy and impartiality, these are routinely undermined, particularly by the military.224

In his analysis of the Komando Jihad trials, noted jurist Busjro Muqoddas describes a law enforcement system that was fatally flawed and unfair from start to finish. “The judicial process in the Komando Jihad cases during the New Order administration,” he

writes, “was not independent or transparent, and can be described as a miscarriage of justice.” Based on multiple interviews with Komando Jihad detainees, Muqoddas concludes that the interrogation depositions were characterized by violence by the military investigators toward the detainees. One of the detainees, Nuri Sularsono, who was sentenced to five years’ prison, was highlighted by Amnesty International in its 1985 report as a possible victim of torture. In a 2006 interview with Nuri, Busjro Muqoddas notes him admitting that at the time of his arrest, “I was passionate about how to uphold Islamic law. It was an opportunity to fight for the enforcement of Islamic law and to die a martyr.” But he alleges that he only confessed to his subversion charge after being told by a military officer that a confession would make the torture stop. During interrogation he had been hit in the face with a chair and hit from behind with a piece of wood embedded with nails.

Some of the harshest treatment was reserved for the two most high-profile Darul Islam leaders swept up in the revival of the movement, Danu Muhammad Hasan and Haji Ismail Pranoto. This was the case despite the fact that they had both claimed to have been working for Indonesian military intelligence. Indeed, it is plausible that their treatment was harsh precisely because they embarrassed the government by detailing their intelligence links, and by unsuccessfully attempting to call, as they did, both Ali Moertopo and Pitut Soeharto to testify at their trials.

The most mysterious case is that of Danu, who, although detained in 1977, unlike other Komando Jihad detainees spent years in extra-judicial detention before going on trial in late 1983. At trial Danu appeared confident that his intelligence connections would protect him. When one of the judges read out his profession as “farmer”, Danu sought to correct the record to reflect the fact that he worked for the government. As quoted by Tempo Magazine, Danu interjected, “I’m not a trader or a farmer, I’m an assistant to BAKIN [military intelligence].” However, Tempo observes, Danu was unable to produce his BAKIN identity card for the judges.

In 1984, Danu was finally convicted.

226 Ibid., 468.
227 Busjro Muqoddas interview with Nuri Sularsono, October 2, 2006.
of subversion and sentenced to fifteen years’ jail, minus time served in extra-judicial custody. In circumstances that are still unclear, however, Danu was released early, in 1986, but died surrounded by family only a day later.

Hispran, also arrested in 1977, was almost certainly tortured during interrogation, evidence of which his trial lawyer bravely attempted to elicit during direct examination. His lawyer asked him if he wore a hearing aid before his arrest. Hispran said he did not. But when his lawyer asked the follow-up question of why he now wears a hearing aid, the chief judge disallowed the question on the basis of relevance. Prosecutors requested the death penalty for Hispran on the basis that he had “overturned, undermined or corrupted the Pancasila State Ideology or the State Course of the Republic of Indonesia.” Hispran, however, was sentenced to life—far longer than most Komando Jihad prisoners, who received between five and twenty years’ in prison. The panel of judges concluded: “Although [the defendant’s actions] have not yet caused the sacrifice of life or property, they could endanger the life or threaten the life of the State or its instruments and undermine its ideology.” He only avoided the firing squad due to the judges’ finding that his crimes had been mitigated by his “contribution to making the 1971 General Election a success for the New Order.” Hispran died in prison in the mid-1990s, only a few years before the anti-subversion law would be one of the first instruments of state power overturned by Indonesia’s post-Suharto movement for democratic reform.

The public suspicion surrounding Komando Jihad has always been that the regime concocted the threat of militant Islam in order to discredit political Islam, especially in the lead up to the 1977 elections. The overwhelming evidence, however, is consistent with the more complicated circumstances of the special operations arm of the regime, led by Ali Moertopo, co-opting and cultivating Darul Islam, Darul Islam taking advantage of this new patronage relationship to revive its vision of an Islamic state, until, finally, the arm of the regime responsible for territorial security, Kopkamtib, acted

230 Court testimony in Hispran case.
231 Putusan in Hispran case.
232 Ibid.
to crush the revival. Such circumstances were hinted at the time by Attorney General Ismail Saleh, who admitted to Tempo Magazine in 1983 that ex-Darul Islam members had indeed been sponsored and given “guidance” by the government. “Under the pretext of being loyal to and cooperating with the government,” he said, “the help they received was used to arrange contacts, and organise their forces to establish NII [Islamic State of Indonesia].”

Nevertheless, the timing of Komando Jihad was convenient and the regime was quick to exploit news linking Islam and extremism for its own political purposes. For example, in April 1977, two weeks before the general election, a front page article in the main Bandung newspaper, Pikiran Rakyat, announced: “10,000 ex-DI/TII [Darul Islam/Islamic Army of Indonesia] Join Golkar.” Although the number was likely an exaggeration, according to military and Golkar officials, former Darul Islam leaders in their traditional stronghold of Tasikmalaya, West Java, had come together to sign a statement rejecting Komando Jihad. Two of the former leaders, M. Budiyarto and Ajengan Mubarok, were quoted as saying that instead of being stirred up by disruptive elements, “we are better off uniting behind the New Order to achieve development.”

Needless to say, Golkar easily won the 1977 election, amid fear and suspicion, with 62 per cent of the vote, the same margin it had won by in 1971. Events surrounding the election would set the pattern for continued suspicion and repression of regime opponents. Without the regime-sponsored revival of Darul Islam in the 1970s, the New Order would not have been able to so easily use the spectre of extremism to discredit political Islam, as it did, through the 1980s. The Komando Jihad controversy ushered in darker, more repressive, times for Muslim activists and politicians that would persist until Suharto’s rapprochement with Islam in the early 1990s. For some, including Hispran recruits and future Jemaah Islamiyah founders Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, the experience of Hispran and others would demonstrate that there was no possibility of compromise with the system. Hispran had been right when, in his personal notebook, he had crafted this statement of purpose and battle cry:

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The struggle of Islam through the parliament has been closed down. The ideology of Islam has been erased. There is no other path than the path of revolution. Don’t try to oppose it. Whoever opposes it will be destroyed.235

**Peak New Order**

The Komando Jihad affair hardened regime attitudes to Islam. The following decade would be marked by tensions centred on efforts to use Pancasila ideology as a weapon against Islamists and other opponents of the regime. Already, in 1978, Suharto began developing an elaborate system of Pancasila indoctrination which would culminate in the so-called P4 program to “upgrade” Pancasila. Notably, the materials for P4 specifically cited Darul Islam, among other rebellions, as evidence of the need to reinforce Pancasila ideology.236 During this period, Suharto’s increasing lack of tolerance for political Islam elicited protest not just from the Muslim community at large but—for the first time since his rise to power—from a large section of the political elite. The problem for critics of the New Order, however, was that the regime was at the height of its repressive powers. For its own part, Darul Islam had been left fractured and demoralized in the aftermath of the mass arrests. But this did not stop some sections of the network from conducting violent attacks, including a plot to bomb tourist sites in Bali—a primitive prefiguring of the mass-casualty attacks on the island in 2002 and 2005.

This period coincides with the political influence of what David Jenkins describes as Suharto’s “inner core group”—an inner circle of high-ranking military and intelligence officials who had a proclivity for taking a practical and even Machiavellian approach to neutralizing enemies, especially those presenting the threat of political Islam. Jenkins continues:

And, having identified political Islam as the major threat to such a society, they felt justified in employing all the means at their disposal, including the resources of the state intelligence services, to divide and discredit the Muslim groupings. In doing so they seemed to have the full support of the president.237

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235 Haji Ismail Pranoto, Catatan Kencana, evidence in Hispran case.
236 Ismail, “Islam, Politics and Ideology in Indonesia,” 147.
The first major episode in undermining the power of political Islam had come in 1973 when both of the main Muslim political streams—the modernists and the traditionalists—were obliged to merge into the electorally unconvincing United Development Party (PPP), under a leadership imposed by, and largely servile to, the government. This had followed from an early Suharto decision in 1967 to maintain the Soekarno ban on the Masyumi party. Many Muslims, who saw their constituency as a natural anti-communist ally of the New Order regime, had expected Suharto to reverse the ban. But Masyumi remained forbidden, thus continuing the political disenfranchisement of a large section of the modernist Muslim community. Under the New Order, political Islam was seen as a threat to regime control and something to be neutralized.

The second major episode came in the early 1980s with the policy to impose Pancasila as the sole basis (asas tunggal) for all social and political groups.

The effort to use the religiously neutral and Javanese-inspired philosophy as a bulwark against political Islam continues a theme in Indonesian politics which can be traced to the constitutional disputes of the 1940s and 1950s over the basis of the state and how much Islam should be accorded special status as the majority religion of the nation. The effort to establish Pancasila was dramatically escalated by Suharto in the 1980s, when what Francois Raillon terms the “bipolar relationship” between the New Order and militant Islam, and Suharto appeared to be developing Pancasila into “a shield to be used against radical Islam.”

The tone for such a clash was set by Suharto in a controversial speech at Pekanbaru in March 1980, in which he strongly implied that Islam was a threat to Pancasila and the nation; he asserted that the armed forces would be used to safeguard them both. The speech crystallized concerns in among the elite and led directly to an elite dissident movement calling itself the Petition of Fifty—a coalition of former senior military generals and political and civil society leaders. The concern that the Pancasila was

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238 François Raillon, “The New Order and Islam, or the imbroglio of faith and politics” Indonesia 57 (1993): 200, 204.
being turned against Islam was thus a mainstream one and far from just the province of radical Muslims. General Nasution, one of the signatories to the petition, exemplified the sense of elite indignation at the speech.

Ninety percent of the Indonesian people are Muslims. It was our mutual understanding from the start that having Islamic aspirations does not mean that one doubts the Pancasila; indeed, with a religious mind the followers can understand the ethics and morals of Pancasila. Bung Karno and Bung Hatta explained this on many occasions.239

Whereas the Pancasila controversy preoccupied mainstream Islamic organizations and members of the political class, paradoxically it was seen rather ambivalently in Darul Islam circles. Much of the network stood aloof from the controversy, just as DI had ignored the debate in the 1950s over the Jakarta Charter, as if it were something occurring in a distant foreign land. However the controversy led to a particularly dangerous convergence of interests between elite critics of the regime and some Darul Islam militants. It is unclear how the two sides found each other, but perhaps it should not be surprising that a section of the political elite hoping to overthrow Suharto sought to use Darul Islam operatives for the purposes of political violence, just as the Suharto regime itself had used Darul Islam against its predecessors.

The coup plot was masterminded by H.M. Sanusi, a Petition of Fifty signatory who had been Minister for Industry and Handicraft in the first cabinet under Suharto as acting president in 1966. Sanusi, along with his collaborators, had been inspired by the Iranian revolution of 1979 and believed that the time had come for an Indonesian revolution to replace Suharto with a ruling coalition he termed NASABRI—denoting nationalists, Islamists and the military.

Sanusi collaborated with Mursalin Dahlan, a Darul Islam member and central figure in the Islamic revival in the city of Bandung in the late 1970s. Dahlan, a preacher with a Muhammadiyah background, was known as a founder of the Pesantren Kilat (“Lightening Pesantren”) movement going by the acronym LP3K. Pesantren Kilat was a form of short-course training that aimed to indoctrinate students against the onslaught of

239 Jenkins, Suharto and his Generals, 162.
secularizing tendencies in society and the state school system. Sanusi met Dahlan through a Jakarta-based group of Muslim dissidents who were interested in acting on the political critique of the Petition of Fifty. According to Dahlan and other witnesses, Sanusi proposed to them a plan for Suharto’s removal which he called “Phases of Revolution” (“Fase-Fase Revolusi”) and which was ostensibly modeled on the Iranian revolution. As Dahlan told interrogators, “Phase after phase of the aforementioned Indonesian Revolution was aligned with the phases of the revolution in Iran that had succeeded in toppling the regime of the Shah.”

The first phase was the assassination of Suharto, unless he could not be made to go into exile, as had Shah Reza Pahlavi. Intermediate phases involved establishing a transitional government drawn from the ranks of the Petition of Fifty. The mobilization of the masses, with the help of militant youth from the Darul Islam network, would lead to the establishment of a NASABRI ruling coalition. The final phase imagined a democratic Islamist system: “If in Iran they established an Islamic State, then in Indonesia we will apply “Total Islam” [Islam Kaffah], Sanusi told Dahlan.

Dahlan was tapped as the coordinator of the various DI groupings around the country. Support for the revolution would primarily come from DI members in Solo and Yogyakarta, under the leadership of future Jemaah Islamiyah founder Abdullah Sungkar and Ir. Syahirul Alim respectively. Dahlan’s main contacts in Central Java were with the young DI members in Yogyakarta who he played a role in recruiting through his Pesantren Kilat and the Muslim youth movement he was part of, Badan Komunikasi Pemuda Mesdjid (Communication Body for Mosque Youth). Figures such as the preachers Muchliansyah, Fihirudin, and his younger brother Irfan Awwas were prominent in the plan just as they were in Darul Islam. The Yogyakarta group were active preachers and recruiters in Sungkar’s usroh movement, usroh being a reference to small the study circles that had been used by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to recruit members, but they had also breathed new life into the movement more broadly

242 Mursalin Dahlan in Sanusi case.
by publishing a radical magazine, *Ar-Risalah* (later *Al-Ikhwan*) from their base at the Sudirman mosque in Yogyakarta. *Al-Risalah*, a photocopied samizdat publication, featured news of dissident activities and protests against the Suharto regime from a revolutionary Islamist perspective. A typical edition would print a letter from the Petition of Fifty movement alongside the writings of seminal foreign Islamist thinkers such as Abul A’la Maududi, Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Banna.

*Ar-Risalah* was also notable for publishing reports of activist activity that, for the first time since Kartosoewirjo, created a record of revolutionary activity. One edition, for example, describes a convention held by Sanusi along with other speakers recognizable as members of the Phases of Revolution plot, including the putative Imam, Syahirul Alim. Describing Sanusi’s appearance at the event, the anonymous *Ar-Risalah* author writes, “As he reached the pulpit the atmosphere became heated with the cries of ‘Allahu Akbar,’” and, according to the report, as a consequence of the crowd’s agitation the organizers were forced to relocate the meeting to the forecourt of the mosque.243

In one meeting in December 1982 in the editorial office of *Ar-Risalah* Sanusi and DI members from Yogyakarta, Solo and East Java discussed their upcoming activities. According to Dahlan, Sanusi said there would be a Grand Assembly (Apel Akbar) in Jakarta by the end of the month as the first phase of the revolution. The plan was that Muslim youth from outside Jakarta would be bussed in and assembled at the National Monument (Monas), under the guise of attending a national art festival that would be held there. From Monas, according to Sanusi, the masses would attack the nearby Presidential Palace and easily bring down the president, “like a ripe Durian”.244

In his speech to the group, Sanusi said Suharto had become a dictator. “He has strayed far from the pure commitments of the New Order, deviated from the Pancasila and the constitution, enriched himself beyond reason and acts alone, not able to take advice from anyone.”245

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243 *Ar-Risalah*, No 21, September 1983, 2.
244 H.M. Sanusi BAP, in Sanusi case, 10.
245 Syahirul Alim in Sanusi BAP, Sanusi case, 27.
In the case that the Grand Assembly failed, Sanusi had provided money for the Plan B: a plot to assassinate Suharto by bombing his vehicle as it made its daily journey bringing the president from his home on Jalan Cendana to his office at the presidential palace. According to witness statements at the time and Darul Islam folklore since, the assassination plot was led by Mursalin Dahlan and a small secret team of operatives who were bound by an own oath of allegiance. 246 One of its members was Nur Iman, a DI member from Bandung who was given Rp. 500,000 by Sanusi to procure explosives and survey the route. Again, the action was meant to take place by the end of the year or early 1983 by the latest. Dahlan in fact hoped that the Grand Assembly could be synchronized with the assassination, so that “before the cock crows on 1983 a new cabinet can be announced.” 247 Sanusi was asked if Muslim leaders in Jakarta like former prime minister Mohammad Natsir should be informed of the plot. Appearing to answer in the negative, Sanusi said, “Natsir clearly wouldn’t agree with the plan but if we succeed of course he would give a smile of relief and we would invite him to fill one of the [government] vacancies later.” 248

Throughout 1982, however, despite Sanusi’s generous financing it was said of him that “If he is asked for money in connection with blowing up the president he would give any amount but for anything else it’s very difficult.” 249 But the assassination squad made little progress. Their main obstacle was a lack of technical capability. In preparing the bomb the remote-detonating device repeatedly failed to work, and on one occasion a bomb exploded by accident. 250 Consequently, in December 1982 Nur Iman reported the failures to Sanusi and suggested that instead of a remote-controlled bomb, the attack should be made with some kind of rocket. Sanusi immediately agreed to the idea and gave Nur Iman Rp. 4 million and a contact in Malaysia. In early January Nur Iman travelled to Malaysia and met with someone who said he could sell them the rocket. But again, despite the largesse of Sanusi the plan would not come to fruition, just as the Grand Assembly had never eventuated.

246 Ibid., 25.
247 Ibid., 27.
248 Ibid., 28.
250 Ibid.
These failures would ultimately spur another bomb plot by Darul Islam members who had lost faith in Dahlan and begun to see him as someone who “can only talk big but never does anything concrete.” This time it was associates of Syahirul Alim in Yogyakarta, who, with the sponsorship of Sanusi, plotted to assassinate Suharto at the ceremony to open the newly renovated Borobudur temple on February 23, 1983. Instead of Mursalin Dahlan they would work with Muhammad Jabir, a Darul Islam veteran from Sulawesi who had helped the Komando Jihad bombers in the mid-1970s produce primitive time-bombs that were used to attack churches in North Sumatra.

With their preparations made, on the day of the twenty-third several of the plotters, including Syahirul Alim gathered at a house owned by Sanusi on Cipinang street in Jakarta to listen to the state radio broadcast of the opening ceremony at Borobudur, in anticipation of the attack that would spark the revolution. The ceremony, however, was broadcast without incident. Around midday the hapless Sanusi arrived at the house to ask why nothing had happened. According to witness accounts, Syahirul Alim replied that that “Allah has not yet destined President Suharto to die.” To which Sanusi answered, “Don’t ever give up.”

The idea to target the newly refurbished Borobudur—for Islamist militants a symbol of the Suharto regime’s privileging of pre-Islamic religion—appears to have inspired a successful attack on the temple by Muhammad Achwan, a Pesantren Kilat organizer from Malang who had been present at the planning meetings with Sanusi in Yogyakarta. Achwan, however, was sponsored in his attack by a militant from Ambon, Husein Ali Al-Habsyi, a blind preacher of Arabic descent who had been more inspired than most by the Iranian Revolution. Al-Habsyi had converted to Shi’ism and advocated, in a study circle that he led in Malang, that oppressed Indonesian Muslims should accept as their Imam the leader of the Iranian revolution, Ruhollah Khomeini. Although this view was at odds with Darul Islam, Darul Islam members like Achwan and Abdul Qadir Baraja were prepared to collaborate in anti-Suharto attacks.

252 A. Marwan Ashuri in Sanusi BAP, Sanusi case, 42.
Al-Habsyi and his group were motivated by conspiracy theories centering on Suharto regime corruption and alleged secret government “Christianisation” policies. In particular they were driven by a desire to hit back after the Tanjung Priok massacre of September 1984, in which government soldiers had shot at and killed dozens of Muslim protesters. Furthermore, as we will see below, for militant Muslims like Al-Habsyi, by late 1984 Tanjung Priok had taken on meaning as a symbol of the regime’s repression of Muslims. Anger over the incident had fused with anger over the imposition of the Pancasila. Worse still, in early and mid-December, the mainstream Muslim organizations Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama had acquiesced and accepted Pancasila as their “sole foundation.” When articulating his motive for his attacks, Al-Habsyi named all these events in one breath, even naming NU chairman Abdurrahman Wahid and other Muslim leaders who had “shut their mouths” in the face of government pressure.254

Al-Habsyi’s first two bombings came later in the month, on Christmas Eve in Malang. Pipe bombs were detonated in the Geredja Katolik Sasana Budya and Seminari Alkitab Asia Tenggara, damaging the buildings but not drawing any casualties. A more successful attack by the group came on January 21, 1985 when several stupas at the top of the Borobudur temple outside Yogykarta were damaged, again by simple time bombs. The only attack by the group that led to fatalities was in fact accidental. In early 1985 members of the group made survey trips to Bali look for targets in the tourism industry. They settled on the Nusa Dua Hotel and a number of small motels in Kuta. On March 15 four members of the group, including Hussein Al-Habsyi’s younger brother Abdul Kadir Al-Habsyi, boarded a bus from Malang to Bali with several pipe bombs in their luggage. En route through the East Javanese town of Banyuwangi, however, one of the bombs exploded prematurely, sending the bus crashing into a house. Seven passengers were killed, three of them members of the Al-Habsyi group. The following day Al-Habsyi was arrested and the Malang group unravelled in the hands of the authorities.

Notably, almost a decade after the Komando Jihad attacks of the 1970s, Darul Islam was no more capable or sophisticated in its bombing operations. Just as in the 1970s,

254 Al-Habsyi testimony in Al Habsyi case [PDFpart1, sect2a], 29.
the explosive used in attacks appears to have been dynamite sourced from the fishing industry and fashioned into small scale time bombs by operatives with only ad hoc training. Consequently, despite the exuberance of the “mosque youth” in Yogyakarta and Malang and the managerial experience of their patron, H.M Sanusi, and the post-Khomeini fever of Al-Habsyi and all of the above, Indonesia never saw its version of the Iranian Revolution. Instead, despite a rise in grievances in the Muslim community, militants were unable to take advantage of a moment of genuine protest. Marred by poor leadership and organisation, and emerging from networks that were well-known to the authorities, the militants’ attacks were dismal failures, both technically and tactically.

Tanjug Priok and further repression
The culmination of the conflict between the New Order and Islam came on September 12, 1984 in the aforementioned shooting of civilian protesters in the port district of Tanjug Priok. The proximate cause of the unrest was a dispute between a mosque and the local military authorities over notices that were posted on an exterior wall of the building. The notices urged children to attend school and mosque and women to wear the headscarf (jilbab). The mosque had refused to take down the notices and accused a local soldier of removing the notices himself by soaking them in water from a gutter. The soldier was also accused of entering the mosque without removing his shoes, a charge which the soldier denied. Protests against the actions of the soldier and the authorities were provoked by local radical preachers, most notably Amir Biki, who had a history of challenging the authorities. According to one report, he gave a speech to a crowd on September 12, immediately prior to the violence, in which he brandished a dagger, and threatened a bloodbath if his demands were not met. He also issued a critique of various government policies that he considered anti-Islam, including the bill on mass organizations (RUU Ormas), which would impose the Pancasila ideology and had been adopted only three weeks’ earlier by the PPP.

Sermons and speeches against the government were nothing new in Tanjug Priok, and the New Order authorities, who had increasingly placed mosques under surveillance, knew it. According to an official source quoted by Tempo magazine, “Since 1983, the atmosphere in Tanjug Priok had already started to heat up, especially in the speeches

and study circles (*pengajian*) in several mosques. The issue that was raised most often was that of Pancasila as the sole foundation.²⁵⁶ According to a “high-ranking official,” also quoted by Tempo, the authorities not only knew about the tensions in Tanjung Priok, but had allowed them to ventilate there: “It’s like someone smoking. The ash, of course, can’t be dropped just anywhere. The ash must be put in an ashtray. Well, Tanjung Priok was in fact deliberately made into an ‘ashtray,’ a place to channel emotions.”²⁵⁷

These *Tempo* sources are partially corroborated by evidence found in surveillance audio recordings of sermons given by Abdul Qadir Djaelani—one of the preachers accused of provoking the unrest—and submitted as evidence in his trial in 1985. One recording shows that Djaelani was being monitored by the authorities as early as 1983; in another, made as late as June 9, 1984 at a mosque in Tanjung Priok, Djaelani is heard repeatedly denouncing the Pancasila-as-sole-foundation policy to the supportive cries of the congregation.²⁵⁸

Compounding Muslim suspicions toward the government, these controversies coincided with the zenith of the career of Benny Moerdani. A military intelligence officer and well known Christian, Moerdani, having been made chief of the armed forces in 1983, continued to grow in political influence through this period. At a press conference on September 13, Benny Moerdani, in his role as Kopkamtib, warned the Indonesian community in stentorian tones to be vigilant of rogue individuals (*oknum oknum*) who may threaten the security and unity of the nation. The Catholic Moerdani asserted that the unrest in Tanjung Priok was clearly the work of a group of people who had “misused the doctrines of a certain religion and a place of worship to provoke the community of the faithful and school children.”²⁵⁹

The Tanjung Priok incident triggered a crackdown on radical preachers across Jakarta and beyond. Oversight of Mosque sermons was increased and ABRI increased its

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²⁵⁷ Ibid.
²⁵⁸ Abdul Qadir Djaelani, audiocassette recording, Mesjid PTDI, Tanjung Priok, June 9, 1984.
diplomacy vis-à-vis the Muslim community in an effort to assuage the concerns of—if not co-opt—its leaders. For example, in Surabaya on October 8 the East Java military command held a conference of ulama from across Java to explain the Tanjung Priok incident. After screening a video message from Benny Moerdani, the East Java area commander told the ulama that his troops were prepared for any eventuality, but “in that preparedness we must be assisted by the ulama.”

Leading the charge to meet Muslim leaders and visit mosques was Try Sutrisno, the Jakarta area military commander, know to be a santri himself and occasionally serve as the prayer leader (imam) at Friday prayers. In a Tempo cover article on the military’s diplomacy with the Muslim community, which featured Sutrisno on the cover wearing a kopiah and kefayah, the general was quoted telling a congregation at the Al-Makmur mosque in Tanah Abang, “No preachers [kiai] have been arrested. Those arrested are people who have broken Indonesian law.” Speaking at the inauguration of the Al-Barokah mosque, Sutrisno reassured the congregation, “In this nation of Pancasila, there is no intention to persecute (memusuhi) Islam.”

In the aftermath of the violence at Tanjung Priok, preachers and congregationalists alike, with no connection to Tanjung Priok, were arrested, giving the impression in Muslim communities that the government was exploiting the incident as an opportunity to punish regime dissidents. Regional authorities also attempted to control the content of sermons and “dakwah”. Commenting on the ban instituted by the regent of Tasikmalaya on dakwah which is against “Pancasila and the 1945 constitution, and obstructs the path of national development and disturbs political stability,” Religious Affairs minister Munawir Sjadzali said that “with the Priok incident, I suppose regional authorities are choosing preachers who they know so as to maintain order and peace in their regions.” Indeed, the Tasikmalaya regent was reported to say, “I don’t want the Tanjung Priok incident to reoccur in Tasikmalaya. As such, I took immediate action.”

On October 4, 1984—less than a month after the Tanjung Priok incident—bombs exploded in the predominantly ethnic Chinese area of central Jakarta. Two of the bombs targeted separate branches of a Chinese-owned bank, BCA, and a third bomb targeted a store in the shopping area of Glodok—Jakarta’s “Chinatown”. Although the bombs were amateurishly made and deployed, the third explosion nevertheless killed the store owner, Go Tjun Hien and a security guard, Effendi. The first of the BCA bombs caused no casualties; the second exploded in the hands of Jayadi, one of the bombing suspects, leaving him with serious injuries.263

Coming in the midst of an ongoing conflict between Islam and the state, naturally suspicion might have fallen on Darul Islam for perpetrating the attacks. But counterintuitive as it may be, the Tanjung Priok massacre and the push to impose Pancasila had less impact in traditional Darul Islam circles than it did in radicalizing more mainstream Muslims. This was because the Pancasila policy, by definition, only applied to mainstream organizations which accepted the legitimacy of the Republican state. Darul Islam, however, long alienated from the mainstream, had never given such acceptance. On the Pancasila-as-sole-foundation controversy, former Darul Islam youth leader Nur Hidayat observes, “Our people considered it the problem of a neighbouring state, so we didn’t care about the sole foundation issue. That has to be underlined.”264

Rather than radicalizing Darul Islam, the New Order drive to inculcate Pancasila radicalized a section of the political elite, represented by the Petition of Fifty signatories. It drove dissident but populist Muslim preachers in Tanjung Priok towards violent means of confrontation. From Benny Moerdani’s initial press conference the day after Tanjung Priok it was clear that dissident preachers would be held accountable for the violence. Moerdani went so far as to name three preachers, who, on the day of the incident had allegedly provoked the crowd with fiery speeches. These were the aforementioned Amir Biki, who was one of those shot dead, Syarifin Maloko S.H., and Muhammad Nasir (a preacher who shared a name with the former prime minister). Following the BCA bombings, several senior government critics were arrested and tried for subversion. These included the former secretary of ASEAN and Siliwangi general

264 Interview with Nur Hidayat, Jakarta, October 17, 2010.
who had helped Soeharto assume power, H.R. Dharsono, and the populist preachers A.M. Fatwa and Abdul Qadir Djaelani. Critics suspected that the government was exploiting the unrest in Priok and the bombings to punish prominent government critics.

In August 1985 A.M Fatwa, Abdul Qadir Djaelani and H.R. Dharsono were brought to trial. According to a source quoted by *Tempo*,

Dharsono and Fatwa have been put in the same category as Abdul Qadir Djaelani and Toni Ardie and associates who were considered to be “provocateurs” [“tukang kipas”], who had helped to ignite the Tanjung Priok incident.

Dharsono, a prominent member of the Petition of Fifty, countered that he and his petition colleagues were different. But his comments were also an illustration of how Soeharto’s policy towards Islam had united otherwise divergent anti-government elements:

They are a group of preachers, whereas we are not. Fatwa is indeed also a preacher. Our similarity centers on the sole foundation issue. This doesn’t mean we are anti-Pancasila, but [anti] the sole foundation. The difference is that they use sermons and speeches and we use the Petition of Fifty.

The preachers were all accused of making statements in sermons which undermined the government, making them guilty of subversion. But Dharsono and A.M Fatwa were also accused of hosting a meeting a week following Tanjung Priok in which a group of Muslim youths were present. According to the prosecutor, the youths discussed a range of actions to be taken in response to Tanjung Priok, including bombings, and that these discussions ultimately led to the BCA bank attacks. Fatwa and Dharsono were charged withabetting the bombings by their presence at the meeting. During the meeting, held in a prayer hall adjacent to the residence of A.M. Fatwa, Dharsono allegedly said, “The Tanjung Priok incident has created widespread dissatisfaction among the people, and this should be capitalized on for the struggle. Let’s not stop at this point, there should be a continuation.”

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The evidence of Dharsono and A.M Fatwa’s involvement in the bombings was slight. The prospect, however, of hitherto non-violent Muslim politicians turning to violent tactics raises the issue of the different responses in the Muslim community to New Order repression and political exclusion. The literature on the causal links between political repression and Islamist radicalization is scant and, at best, inconclusive.\(^{266}\) But it is plausible that some mainstream or at least non-violent Muslim figures adopted violent jihadist agendas in response to incidents like Tanjung Priok, the forced adoption of Pancasila, and the general perception that the regime was persecuting Muslims. Indeed, by maintaining the ban on Masyumi and prohibiting independent Muslim political parties, the regime likely drove some in the rising modernist Muslim urban class over to the jihadist cause.

However, while there is strong evidence from other countries that indiscriminate and tyrannical repression provokes increased militancy among Islamist groups (consider Algeria and Egypt in the 1990s), as Shadi Hamid observes, such extremes are rare. Most autocrats in the Muslim world prefer a less arduous and risky combination of carrots and sticks to suppress their political opponents. “It is usually preferable to employ low to moderate levels of repression,” Hamid argues, “and to use political incentives and the threat of sanction to co-opt and divide opponents.”\(^{267}\) In the face of selective repression and political exclusion, a common response is to simply withdraw from the political sphere or political competition with the regime.\(^{268}\) Hamid refers to this effect as “forced moderation”. Indeed, forced moderation was the overwhelming consequence for most Muslim critics of the New Order regime, who withdrew from formal politics, perhaps in hope of avoiding both cooptation and repression of their organisations. Leading the way in this response was Nahdlatul Ulama, which, in 1984, formally withdrew from party politics in order to focus on its social and educational roles. Shortly thereafter, NU became the first Islamic mass organization to adopt Pancasila as its “sole basis”.

\(^{266}\) For a recent discussion of the literature, see Shadi Hamid, *Temptations of Power: Islamists and illiberal democracy in a new Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), Ch. 2.

\(^{267}\) Hamid, *Temptations of Power*, 45. For a similar argument, see Muhammad M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: repression and resistance in the Islamic world* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), Ch. 3.

\(^{268}\) Mohammed M. Hafez makes a similar point about selective repression in *Why Muslims Rebel* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003), 75.
Conclusion

The revival of Darul Islam under the New Order regime saw the reestablishment of long dormant networks of jihadists motivated to violently oppose the state. But the revival was fundamentally unstable, based, paradoxically, on accepting co-optation by the state. Although the movement sought to act in its own right and to throw off the shackles of regime co-optation, having allowed state sponsorship and patronage from the outset of the revival, movement militants were highly vulnerable to surveillance and arrest. Thus, during the 1970s Darul Islam found itself exploited and out-maneuvered by the state at every turn. In the 1980s Darul Islam did little better for itself. Its attacks against the state were poorly planned and executed, and reflected a lack of technical capability. Meanwhile, aloof from mainstream politics, Darul Islam was unable to capitalize on a high level of grievance in the Muslim community at the perceived victimization of Muslims by the Suharto regime. Ultimately, a weak jihadist movement was defeated by effective state co-optation and repression.

Moreover, mainstream political Islam was also repressed by the Suharto regime, a fact that was not lost on militants such as Hispran, and, as we shall see in the following chapter, his recruit, Abdullah Sungkar. The regime, therefore, was successful in blocking two channels of opposition at the same time: the peaceful and the militant. Many Muslim political activists simply withdrew from formal politics, like those of Nahdlatul Ulama, to focus on apolitical cultural activities and proselytizing. But for a section of the Darul Islam movement, New Order repression was so overwhelming that it was motivated to seek refuge in neighbouring Malaysia. This initial push factor would trigger a process of transnationalisation leading to regional assemblage that would later be instrumental in the rise of global jihadism in Southeast Asia.
The Darul Islam revival of the 1970s might have had no lasting consequences had it not served to bridge the traditional jihadism of Darul Islam with the modern salafi jihadism of what would later emerge as Jemaah Islamiyah. As we have seen, during the revival Hispran recruited two radical preachers from Central Java, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, inducting the preachers into the Darul Islam community. Crucially, Sungkar and Ba’asyir, just like their senior colleague Hispran, would conclude that there was no space for formal Islamic opposition in Suharto’s Indonesia. Now, via Darul Islam, Sungkar and Ba’asyir would get their first taste of violent jihadism. It was the preachers’ response to the problem of political exclusion that would change the course not just of Indonesian jihadism, but jihadism in the region. They sought safe haven in Malaysia, where they continued to develop a following, now on both sides of the border with Indonesia. Thus we can see them as key initial agents in the process of transnationalisation and regional assemblage. But, as we shall see in this chapter, even before exile in Malaysia, Sungkar had done much to transnationalise the movement in terms of its ideology and organization.

Abdullah Sungkar would emerge as the most charismatic Darul Islam leader since Kartosoewirjo. But unlike previous leaders, who had kept themselves in rustic isolation, Sungkar was attuned to developments in global Muslim politics and international affairs. Through his skill in adapting new ideas from the Middle East and elsewhere, before he even left for Malaysia, Abdullah Sungkar began to modernize and deterritorialize Darul Islam, bringing it more in tune with the salafist and Muslim Brotherhood ideas emerging from the Middle East. He accepted the obvious: that the battle for Kartosoewirjo’s Islamic State was no longer possible in New Order Indonesia, in which almost every inch of territory was subject to regime surveillance and repression. So he sought to rebuild the movement for an Islamic state from the ground up, starting with small study groups and focusing on developing a community or jemaah.
But even with this more strategic approach, he and Ba’asyir would not last long in 1980s Indonesia. It is likely that even without Abdullah Sungkar, New Order repression of Islamists in the 1970s and 1980s would have pushed some jihadists into exile. But the process of political exclusion that would culminate in regional assemblage was greatly enhanced by the entrepreneurial leadership of Sungkar, who, well before his arrival in Malaysia was looking beyond the horizon of Indonesia.

A new leader emerges

The key to understanding Abdullah Sungkar’s transformation of Indonesian jihadism is to realize that he came to the movement as an outsider. His family had no Darul Islam background but instead was connected to Muslim world at large. Sungkar’s mother was a local Javanese but his father had emigrated to Indonesia from the Hadramaut region of Yemen. Given his father’s lack of Indonesian or Javanese, Sungkar grew up speaking Arabic.  

He became a member of the Union for Reformation and Guidance, commonly known as al-Irsyad, an organization for Indonesian Muslims of Arab descent. Politically, he became aligned with the modernist camp as a member of Masyumi, the Muslim political party and movement which had been barred from electoral politics under the Suharto regime. Along with other disenfranchised Masyumi members he was an early follower of the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, DDII) and a supporter of its leader, Muhammad Natsir, the former prime minister and Masyumi politician. Natsir had established DDII in 1967 with an inward focus on religious proselytizing (dakwah) as a lower-profile alternative to political competition given that he and Masyumi remained banned from politics under the Suharto regime. Yet, as Martin van Bruinessen remarks, under the leadership of Natsir, “the most charismatic puritan Muslim leader there ever was,” DDII became “one of the most important voices of dissent in New Order Indonesia.”

Sungkar’s radicalization, then, came via two main influences—the traditionalist Hispran and the modernist Muhammad Natsir. Both of these men were sharp critics, in their

269 Anonymous interview with Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, 2004
different ways, of the exclusion of Muslims from the political process. It was the fusion of the different approaches represented by Hispran and Natsir that produced in Sungkar an original and potent new approach to opposing Suharto.

Yet Sungkar’s dominant personal influence was always his mentor Natsir, who according to Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, was his “idol.” Indeed, Sungkar appears to have taken after the older man, with his educated critique of secular politics and his charismatic persona. Given this background it is hard to imagine Sungkar would have joined the Darul Islam, a movement that, in contrast to Natsir, countenanced violence against the state, if Indonesia at the time had tolerated a peaceful Islamist opposition party. As Sidney Jones first observed:

> It is questionable whether a man like Abdullah Sungkar, JI’s founder, would have made common cause with DI if the New Order government had allowed a party like Masyumi, the largest Muslim party before its banning by Sukarno in 1960, or any party headed by Mohammad Natsir, to function freely.

Before he was introduced to Darul Islam, Abdullah Sungkar became known in Central Java in the late 1960s as an outspoken and eloquent itinerant preacher, highly critical of the Suharto regime. He came to prominence through his regular thirty-minute sermons delivered at the Surakarta Grand Mosque and for helping to establish, with Ba’asyir in 1969, Radio Dakwah Islamiyah Surakarta (RADIS), a pirate radio station that was eventually shut down by the local authorities on account of its anti-government content. For the time, their broadcasts were uncommonly provocative. In one instance, Ba’asyir riffed on life under the Suharto regime, reportedly saying, “We Indonesians live as if we were riding an air-conditioned bus. It’s all cool and comfortable but we are actually heading towards hell. And the driver is ... Suharto!”

In the early 1970s Sungkar and Ba’asyir were under the political influence of Muhammad Natsir when his Dewan Dakwah increasingly adopted a puritanical

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approach to Islamic theology, due in large part to growing Saudi influence. Such influence sought to purify Islam of the accretions of local traditions, return to the key scriptures, the Qur’an and Hadith. DDII activists promoted in the community public expressions of piety, narrowly construed, and highly inflected by Arab culture—expressions designed to distinguish the pious from ostensibly less pious Muslims. For example, the wearing of the hijab for women, gender segregation, and Arabic language forms of address were all encouraged. At this time DDII became the main conduit for Saudi funding of Islamic education in Indonesia, via the World Islamic League.275

In 1970 Sungkar was made assistant chairman of the Solo branch of Dewan Dakwah and in 1972 he and Ba’asyir founded the Al-Mukmin pesantren, eventually located in Ngruki, near Solo. Along with their puritanism, the Ngruki founders were also modernist preachers who saw themselves as offering their students a modern curriculum, up to date with advances in science and education. Thus, Ngruki’s Arabic program was modeled on the program taught at Gontor, one of the most prestigious religious schools in Java (and the school where Abu Bakar Ba’asyir himself had been a distinguished student). Likewise, Ngruki’s Islamic law program was based on the program taught by Persatuan Islam (Islamic Association) at their pesantren in Bangil, a school renowned for its puritanical modernism.276

According to Ba’asyir and sources close to Ngruki, in the mid-1970s, preceding Ba’asyir and Sungkar’s recruitment into Darul Islam, the pair attempted to form an underground movement to promote the adoption of Islamic law by teaching followers to model their lives on the actions of the Prophet.277 As Muhammad had spread Islam by first forming a congregation (or jama’ah) of followers, so they decided to turn away from Islamic political parties and mass organizations like DDII and towards forming their own tightly knit following. To this end they approached twelve Muslim preachers in Solo to help form a congregation that would serve as the seed of a new movement.

275 Kahin, Islam, Nationalism and Democracy, 193-194.
276 Martin van Bruinessen, “Divergent Paths From Gontor: Muslim Educational Reform And The Travails Of Pluralism In Indonesia” (Utrecht: Utrecht University, 2006), 197.
But none of the twelve men approached would commit to an organization which, no doubt, would have risked becoming a target of repression.\textsuperscript{278}

It was only in late 1976, after the failure of their attempt to start an underground movement of their own, that Sungkar and Ba’asyir joined Darul Islam. Since the mid-1970s the pair had been visited by Hispran, the Central Java DI leader, in the course of the latter’s efforts to revive Darul Islam in the province. Sungkar and Ba’asyir were both inducted into Darul Islam in December 1976, with Sunkgar made leader for the Surakarta area, and Ba’asyir his deputy.\textsuperscript{279} According to Ba’asyir, the oath-swearing ceremony was conducted by Hispran himself, even though they would subsequently deny this.\textsuperscript{280} Sungkar’s decision to join Indonesia’s oldest militant Islamic movement, mystical and backward looking, was at odds with his natural alliance with modernist Muslim critics of the New Order. On hearing of Sungkar’s move, DDII leader Muhammad Natsir demanded that Sungkar choose his allegiance: either Darul Islam or Dewan Dakwah—but not both. In the early1950s, Natsir, as prime minister and Masyumi chairman, had agreed with the goal of an Islamic state but had vigorously opposed Darul Islam’s violent methods. But Sungkar, by the time he joined Darul Islam, appears to have given up on peaceful mainstream politics. He relinquished his position in DDII without noticeable regret.\textsuperscript{281} Within Darul Islam, Sungkar and Ba’asyir quickly emerged as two of the movement’s most industrious and dynamic activists. Their efforts to recruit students in Central Java continued apace, only now under the auspices of the Islamic State of Indonesia.

\textbf{Sungkar’s radicalization}

Although Abdullah Sungkar might be described as a radical preacher from early on, it was only as a member of Darul Islam that he appears to have been drawn into the periphery of episodes of violent confrontation with the state. In 1977, Sungkar was detained for a month by Kopkamtib for using his sermons to encourage voters to boycott the general election, an offense in New Order Indonesia. The following

\textsuperscript{278} Anonymous interview with Ba’asyir, 2004.

\textsuperscript{279} Solahudin, \textit{NII sampai JI}, 143.

\textsuperscript{280} Anonymous interview with Ba’asyir, 2004.

\textsuperscript{281} Ibid.
November both Sungkar and Ba’asyir were detained on charges of subversion, part of the wider military crackdown on what the regime called “Komando Jihad.” It was alleged that they had made anti-government statements in their sermons and had refused to honour the Indonesian flag at their Ngruki pesantren. The case against them would turn, however, on the claim that the radical clerics had become members of the Islamic State of Indonesia, a charge they denied.282

Given access to the wide Darul Islam network, Sungkar had gone from being a rising star on the dissident landscape in Java to having access to an Indonesia-wide network of potential collaborators and recruits. By 1977 he had been made regional commander for the Solo area and was regularly attending Darul Islam meetings.283 Sungkar spent most of 1978 evading the military authorities after they had called him to account for a sermon in which he had criticized Pancasila. He was finally arrested late that year in the midst of an ongoing crackdown on Darul Islam followers in Central Java which had seen many of his recruits and peers also arrested. This period of “mass arrests,” which, as we saw in the previous chapter, ended the Darul Islam revival, was perhaps the most traumatic period for the movement during the New Order.

In Central Java, one Darul Islam response to the arrests, when members were not on the run, was to strike back against government informants who were suspected of compromising the movement. The recourse to violence was led by two formidable members of a newly created Darul Islam “Special Forces” (Pasukan Khusus) unit, Warman and Farid Ghozali. The unit had been established by the new Islamic State of Indonesia imam, Adah Djaelani, to serve as a kind of praetorian guard which would protect Djaelani personally, as well as carry out certain dangerous or risky operations. Such operations included those deemed to constitute fa’i, a Qur’anic term for the “spoils of war” but here used to describe robberies conducted to generate funds for the movement, and assassinations of members who had betrayed the Islamic State of Indonesia. Warman, especially, was a renowned bandit, having conducted a string of

armed robberies in his previous base of South Sumatra before successfully fleeing the region and finding refuge in Central Java. 284

To avenge the arrest of Sungkar, on January 11, 1979 Warman, Ghozali and two other prominent members close to Sungkar, Hasan Bauw and Abdullah Umar, talked their way into the home of Drs. Parmanto. After gaining entry, Warman allegedly fired several bullets from a pistol at Parmanto, killing him. Not long after the murder the authorities arrested more Darul Islam members, this time very close to home. A raid on Farid Ghozali house was carried out, in which Ghozali was shot dead. This time there were rumours that Hasan Bauw, the Darul Islam commander for Yogyakarta, had informed on Ghozali. Again motivated by revenge, Warman and his associates murdered Hasan Bauw.

The Warman murders in January 1979 were followed by a series of fa’i operations. In February Warman and other special forces personnel stole over Rp. 4 million from an Islamic university in Yogyakarta, in an attack in which they fired a weapon at a university cashier. Following this they conducted an armed robbery of a night bus, netting an unknown sum of money. An armed robbery of a gold trader in Majenang produced money and goods worth Rp. 11 million. Finally, in late 1979, and not long after the failed robbery of a teacher training college in Malang, Warman and several of his associates were arrested. Warman, however, was able to escape detention and remain on the run for almost two years. On July 23, 1981 he was found hiding in a village near Bandung, where he was killed by the authorities while attempting to flee. In explanation of Warman’s earlier escape from custody, Kopkamtib commander Admiral Sudomo indulged the popular mystique which had come to shroud what the newspapers had called Kasus Teror Warman. “The security [at the prison] was strong and comprehensive,” he said, “but that kind of person has the power to hypnotize.” 285

Darul Islam’s violent turn in Central Java appears to have been a symptom of the controversial leadership of veteran Darul Islam commander, Adah Djaelani. Djaelani had been jockeying for power since at least 1975 when Darul Islam moderates, Djadja

Sudjadi and Kadar Solihat, had formed a breakaway group that they called Jihad Fillah. The presence of the Jihad Fillah faction, with the possibility that Djadjja Sudjadi was attempting to claim the Darul Islam imamate for himself, only intensified the rivalry between the two veteran commanders. According to Djaelani, from 1978 his and Sudjadi’s faction competed over the same recruitment base in the Darul Islam heartland of West Java, leading to mutual animosities and betrayals. In response, Djaelani said in his trial in 1983, he ordered that Sudjadi be legally sanctioned with some kind of punishment—kidnapping, for example. However, only months later, he claimed, did he learn that Sudjadi had been shot dead.  

But another, more popular, version of Sudjadi’s death has it as an assassination. It is claimed that Djaelani misled Darul Islam elder Ajengan Masduki into sanctioning Sudjadi’s assassination by asking him what, according to Islamic law, should happen if there are two people who claim to be the rightful imam. Masduki allegedly responded that the legal approach would be to consider one imam false, the punishment for which would be death. Masduki, however, was unaware he was being manipulated into giving approval for the application of the death penalty to a senior Darul Islam fighter.

Sudjadi and his son-in-law were shot dead in the living room of their home on January 17, 1979, by a group of unidentified assailants. It is likely that the killing was yet another special forces operation, as Tahmid Kartosoewirjo suggested to a court in 1983. Sudjadi’s wife told reporters that in the days before the attack, senior Darul Islam leaders had made visits to press Sudjadi to rejoin the mainstream of the movement, code for accepting Adah Djaelani’s leadership. Since rejecting their entreaties, she said, he had been nervously awaiting the consequences.

The Sudjadi assassination can been seen as marking the beginning of the short-lived reign (until August 1981) of Adah Djaelani, which was characterized by Darul Islam’s

much more casual propensity for deploying violence against individuals. Later that year, on July 1, 1979, Adah was formally appointed as the new Imam of the Islamic State of Indonesia in what some senior Darul Islam figures later described as a “bloodless coup.” It is not clear where Abdullah Sungkar stood on Adah Djaelani’s controversial leadership. But it is noteworthy that prior to his joining Darul Islam the Solo-based preacher appears to have been associated with only non-violent dissident activities. Association with Darul Islam changed that fact, and thus played the most decisive role in the radicalization of Abdullah Sungkar’s ideology. As we saw in the previous chapter, in the early 1980s Sungkar was drawn into Mursalin Dahlan’s Phases of Revolution plot. From these formative years on, Sungkar would be committed to the violent overthrow of the state.

**Sungkar at trial**

While Sungkar’s early experience in Darul Islam drew him into violent jihadism, it was his and Ba’asyir’s trial for subversion in 1982 that established him as one of the most powerful critics of the Suharto regime. Sungkar, according to his closest confidante of many years, could not be bothered to write but could speak in a way enchanted audiences. Thus he was as suited to the show trial and he was to the pulpit. Sungkar’s defense statement, published in edited form that same year by Ar-Risalah Press, constitutes one of the most articulate dissident critiques of the New Order by anyone of the period. Sungkar’s court performance also marked him out as a powerful next-generation Darul Islam ideologue, at a time when the organization was ideologically adrift.

To appreciate how Sungkar was able to mount such a stinging public attack on the government in a climate in which political speech was highly circumscribed, and to register something of the impact of the event, it is useful to first consider the place of court trials at that time in Indonesia. In New Order Indonesia, court trials were sites of “contentious performances,” in the metaphor of sociologist Charles Tilly. Tilly defines contentious performances as “learned and historically grounded performances” in which actors make claims that bear on the interests of other actors in ways that improvise on a

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As Tilly explains, “In a given time and place, people learn a limited number of claim-making performances, then mostly stick with those performances when the time to make claims arrives.”

Paradoxically, in New Order Indonesia oral and written defense statements at trials (pledoi) were an opportunity for dissidents to criticize the regime, air grievances, and make public allegations. Courts were relatively open platforms for such political speech, despite their being an expression of state power in which the verdict was almost always pre-determined. For example, in his 1978 subversion trial, mystic and former Agriculture Department functionary, Sawito Kartowibowo, launched a series of sensational and unheard of claims of corruption and misconduct, directed at the Suharto regime, claims subsequently reported in the press.

In a 1979 trial for insulting the president, student leader Heri Akhmadi gave an eloquent and searching critique of the New Order regime; his defense statement was later published by the Cornell Southeast Asia Program. As Ariel Heryanto observes in his study of a number of trials under the New Order, “the importance of many political trials … lies in the fact that they allowed an open confrontation between the agents of the state and their critics,” a confrontation in which, he notes in the cases that he considered, “the final outcome of the case gave the ruling regime a victory in legal terms but an expensive symbolic defeat in political terms.”

In Indonesia, show trials in which the “show” is subverted by dissidents into a claim-making performance trace their tradition back to the defense statement made by the country’s future present Soekarno before a Dutch colonial judge in Bandung in 1930. Soekarno’s critique of the colonial authorities was later published by the Soekarno government under the title Indonesia Menggugat (Indonesia Accuses), a publication.

293 Ibid., 4.
294 David Bourchier, *Dynamics of Dissent in Indonesia: Sawito and the Phantom Coup* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1984).
which subsequently entered the Indonesian nationalist canon.\textsuperscript{297} The \textit{Indonesia Menggugat} tradition, echoing Emile Zola’s 19\textsuperscript{th} century cry at official injustice in his article, “J’Accuse!”, regularly inspires critics, most of them on the page rather than in the dock, to cast their formal critiques in the idiom of an “accusation.” Thus Sawito’s defense statement at his appeal to the Jakarta High Court in 1982 was titled \textit{Pancasila Menggugat (Pancasila Accuses)}.\textsuperscript{298}

Following in this tradition, Sungkar’s defense statement is a panoramic critique of the Suharto regime and its human rights record, set out in the vocabulary of Indonesian law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He is not afraid accuse the authorities of torturing him and other Darul Islam detainees, nor to impugn the independence of the prosecutor, whom he accuses of being under the control of Kopkamtib, an “unconstitutional institution”—an accurate description for the Suharto-established apparatus which had effectively granted permanent martial law powers to the Indonesian military.

Sungkar’s critique of the political system under Suharto was just as dauntless. Of significance for theories linking political exclusion to radicalization, Sungkar explicitly makes the case that he had been radicalized by the exclusion of Muslims like him from the political process in Indonesia. He targets what he calls the “hijacking” of previously independent organizations, including Islamic organizations, by New Order intelligence operations. He notes that with rigged elections and no independent political organizations, Muslims, such as the DDII leader Muhammad Natsir, have been forced to abandon the political stage, and to limit themselves to proselytizing, or \textit{dakwah}, a path which he himself has been forced to follow. But now, he observes, the regime is trying to control \textit{dakwah} too—a reference to regime attempts to control speech within the mosque. Preachers in mosques are “forced to follow the opinions and thoughts of

\textsuperscript{297} Soekarno, \textit{Indonesia Menggugat: Pidato Pembelaan Bung Karno Di Mukahakim Kolonial} (Giwangan, Yogyakarta: Yayasan Untuk Indonesia, 2001). Not all dissidents, however, were permitted to give the defense statement they had prepared. East Timorese guerrilla commander and future President Xanana Gusmao was blocked from delivering his powerful defense plea in his 1993 subversion trial. According to one account, when delivering his statement “he had got no further than page 3 of his 28-page text when the judge stopped him on the grounds that his defence was irrelevant. That was apparently unprecedented in the history of Indonesia’s political trials.” See Herbert Feith, \textit{The East Timor Issue Since the Capture of Xanana Gusmao} (Fitzroy, Vic.: East Timor Talks Campaign, 1993), 3.

\textsuperscript{298} Bourchier, \textit{Dynamics of Dissent}, 1984.
the authorities,” Sungkar claims, “until soon they will not allow religious interpretations based on pure religious teachings.”

For Sungkar the solution to such a political impasse is to restrict oneself purely to matters of Islamic law as it is revealed in the Qur’an and Hadith, and according to the “opinions of all the major religious scholars acknowledged by the Muslim community around the world.” Sungkar then cites writings that are “distributed widely throughout the country, in magazines and other publications.” His list of publications, however, reveals that his reading consisted of material far from what might be considered mainstream Islamic scholarship. Indeed, most of his reading was radical Islamist canon. It includes the 13th century scholar, Taqiyuddin Ibnu Taimiyah, the militant Pakistani ideologue, Abu A’la Al Maududi, and the dissident Muslim Brotherhood figure, Sayyid Qutb—authors now considered foundational in the development of Salafi-Jihadist ideology.

Sungkar then draws on Maududi and Qutb to argue that Pancasila is incompatible with Islam. Furthermore, he argues that to consider Pancasila as the sole foundation of the law is to set it against Allah, who should instead be the sole source of law. Therefore, adhering to Pancasila is a form of idol worship—a sin which makes the one who commits it an idolater (syirik), who “will not be absolved by Allah, and will be tortured in hell for eternity.”

The recourse to Islamic law and the sovereignty of God was the centerpiece of Sayyid Qutb’s remedy for injustice and corruption in Egypt under the secular rule of Gamal Abdel Nasser. It was a remedy Qutb himself borrowed from Maududi, who also railed against secular authority on the basis that it contravened the principle of tauhid, the unity of God and His authority. Qutb coined the term tauhid hakimiyyah to express the precept that unity must be maintained when it came to law and governance and also that any deviation from such unity, say, in the passing of legislation which does not

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299 Suryahardy, *Perjalanan Hukum*, 92.
300 Ibid., 101.
have a basis in the Qur’an, would be considered a breach of unity and thus a form of idolatry or polytheism.\textsuperscript{302}

Sungkar’s defiant and ideological defense statement stands in stark contrast to that of Hispran, his Darul Islam recruiter, who was tried in 1978. Hispran’s densely handwritten defense statement is a pusillanimous screed in which he pretends to have long-since renounced the Islamic State of Indonesia, blames his Darul Islam colleagues for being the true leaders of the revival, and begs for forgiveness from the government and its security apparatus—the rulers of a state based on the Pancasila, which, in stark contrast to Sungkar, he is keen to affirm, beseeching his judges to agree that “a state which is based on the Pancasila is a state which is inspired by the one true God and humanitarianism … [and thus] will surely treat me justly.”\textsuperscript{303} For all his remorse and conciliation, Hispran was sentenced to life in prison, one of the longest prison sentences of any Darul Islam convict.

By contrast, Abdullah Sungkar, who explicitly rejected the law on Pancasila as the state ideology—not just in his sermons but also before his judges—was sentenced, along with Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, to nine years’ prison. They were both released, however, on September 9, 1982, not long after the close of their trial, when the Central Java High Court reduced their sentence to three years and ten months—a period less than the time they had already served in pre- and post-trial detention.

Nevertheless, two years’ later, on February 11, 1985, at the appeal of the prosecutor the initial nine-year sentence was reinstated. But before Sungkar and Ba’asyir could be re-arrested to serve the balance of their prison time, they fled the country. According to their lawyer, Rustamadji, immediately prior to their disappearance, his clients had become concerned after they were served a summons by both the prosecutor’s office and the Surakarta court, at the same time as the security services stepped up their presence outside the Ngruki boarding school. The chairman of the Ngruki foundation revealed that sometime in February, Sungkar and Ba’asyir had in fact resigned from

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\textsuperscript{303} Pembelaan in Hispran case, 16.
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their positions at the school, ostensibly in order to free themselves to serve the remainder of their prison sentence.\textsuperscript{304}

Just as Ariel Heryanto observes in his own study of political trials during the New Order, the trial of Sungkar and Ba’asyir may have resulted in jail time for the defendants, but it hardly advantaged the regime. On the one hand the defendants ultimately evaded the final verdict (the verdict was annulled by the time Sungkar and Ba’asyir returned from exile). On the other, their defense statements, published by the mosque youth behind \textit{Ar-Risalah} magazine, enhanced Sungkar’s charismatic authority and served as inspiration for his followers. As I note later, Sungkar’s trial performance would serve as required reading for his \textit{usroh} recruits, exposing them not just to the thinking of Sungkar but also to that of foreign radical Islamists.

The origins of Salafi Jihadism in Indonesia

When Abdullah Sungkar established the guidelines for Jemaah Islamiyah in the mid-1990s he created perhaps the first Southeast Asian jihadist group explicitly dedicated, according to its constitution, to the Salafi method.\textsuperscript{305} Salafi jihadism has since become a popular descriptor for some groups that grew out of the Arab response to the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union, most notably al-Qaeda. Yet, as Thomas Hegghammer has shown, groups described as Salafi jihadist do not represent a coherent set of beliefs or doctrines.\textsuperscript{306} Following Hegghammer, I suggest understanding Salafism, a puritanical impulse originating in Saudi Arabia, as a cultural influence which inflects and influences a range of jihadist groups to varying degrees. In combination with influences from the Muslim Brotherhood, and dissident brotherhood figures like Sayyid Qutb, Salafism can be seen as contributing to a broadly defined jihadist ideology and culture, the dominant culture among militant Islamist groups today. The problem with Salafi jihadism as a category of groups, as Hegghammer argues, is that it does not necessarily tell us what a group’s immediate targets or significant goals might be.

\textsuperscript{304}“Hilangnya Sungkar dan Ba’asyir,” \textit{Tempo}, March 22, 1985.
\textsuperscript{305}Pedoman Umum Perjuangan Al Jamaah Al Islamiyah, 1996, Chap. 2, section 4,
I consider Abdullah Sungkar’s introduction of Salafi culture to Indonesian jihadism as having paved the way for the movement’s territorial transnationalization by first transnationalizing its culture and ideology. In terms of his thinking, before he ever left Indonesia Sungkar had already transcended the confines of Darul Islam tradition and adopted militant Islamist ideas that put him in the ideological company of jihadists elsewhere in the Muslim world.

However, due to the lack of clarity in the way the term is used, there is some debate as to how far back one can trace Salafi jihadism in Indonesia. One prominent Indonesian scholar argues that such ideas can be traced to the very beginning of the Darul Islam movement. In his book *NII Sampai JI: Salafy Jihadisme di Indonesia* (*From NII to JI: Salafi Jihadism in Indonesia*), the researcher and former journalist, Solahudin, claims that aspects of Salafi jihadism were developed independently in Darul Islam as early as the 1950s, so that “the school of thought associated with the ideology of Al-Qaeda in fact resembles teachings followed by Darul Islam members in the past.”

This claim centers on Darul Islam’s early use of the concept of *takfir*—declaring one’s Muslim enemies apostate and thus legitimate targets of jihad, a practice for which some Salafi jihadi groups are notorious. Solahudin points to the criminal code of the Islamic State of Indonesia, published in 1949, to show that Darul Islam practiced *takfir* by sharply dividing Indonesians into those it considered genuine Muslims and those it considered infidels (*kafir*). Indeed, the code enshrines such a dichotomy under the rubrics “Umat Muslimin” (the Muslim Community, which lived under Darul Islam control) and “Umat Kafirin” (the Infidel Community, which lived under Republican “occupation”).

There are, however, two problems with identifying Darul Islam’s early use of *takfir* with Salafi jihadism. First, as Hegghammer observes, *takfir* is a pejorative term and, historically, Salafi jihadi groups have been accused of “takfirism” for political reasons, predominantly by Arab governments that have sought to delegitimize those groups with an unattractive label. Takfirism, moreover, is not an identifiable doctrine and the adjective *takfiri* is not used as by jihadists as a self-appellation. Rather, as Hegghammer

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notes, in Islam, excommunicating one’s Muslim enemies has traditionally been done by different groups, to varying degrees, and for different purposes. Takfīrism is thus a standard tactic of Muslim extremists.

Second, Darul Islam’s early use of takfīr came in the context of an insurgency against the Indonesian Republic, and during a war of independence against the Dutch. It is true that its penal code refers to the “Infidel Community” as those under republican sovereignty, but this description comes under an article headed “Wartime Islamic Law” (“Hukum Islam dalam Masa Perang”). As the wartime context from which Darul Islam emerged receded into the past, so did its use of takfīrism. If takfīrism was used later, it was deployed in a much more limited way to refer to Suharto or his regime—a practice not limited to Salafi jihadists—and it was not applied to the community at large.

Nevertheless, Solahudin does unearth an early example of an idea from militant Islamist reformers in the Middle East that had found its way to Darul Islam. He observes the similarity between the concept of tauhid hakimiyah, formulated by Sayyid Qutb to signify the sovereignty of God’s law (the rejection of which leads a Muslim to be designated an infidel) to the concept of tauhid mulkiyah, formulated by the Darul Islam ideologue Aceng Kurnia, sometime in the 1970s. Tauhid mulkiyah was intended to refer to the kingdom (from “Malik,” the Arabic for “King,”) of God on Earth, and by analogy the government of God, which of course applies Islamic law. Such a kingdom was intended to be a reference to, and legitimization of, Darul Islam’s Islamic State of Indonesia, a rejection of which could also result in one being considered an infidel. According to Solahudin, Aceng Kurnia developed the concept after reading Indonesian translations of Sayyid Qutb and Abu A’la Maududi in the 1970s, in particular Qutb’s Milestones. And while Kurnia’s elaboration of tauhid was “relatively original,” Solahudin writes that, “this was a DI version of the doctrine of tauhid that was increasingly similar to the Salafi jihadi version of tauhid hakimiyah.” Indeed, in

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309 David Cook, Understanding Jihad (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 139.
310 Solahudin, NII sampai JI, 128-129.
311 Ibid., 126.
312 Ibid., 273.
Sayyid Khatab’s research on the linguistic origins of Qutb’s *hakimiyyah*, he finds that the Arabic term *mulk* is equivalent to the term *hakimiyyah* in denoting sovereignty:

> [T]he term *hakimiyyah* is synonymous with the term *mulk* (dominion, power, rule, supreme power of authority). In dictionary terms, ‘The *malik* is the sovereign’. This is one of the ninety-nine special attributes of Allah. He is the Dominion of the Heavens and earth. He is the King, the Ruler of Mankind. This means that the *hakim* (sovereign) is the *malik* (sovereign) and that the *hukm* (sovereignty) is synonymous with the *mulk* (sovereignty).

Aceng Kurnia’s coinage of *tauhid mulkiyah*, being linguistically synonymous with Qutb’s *hakimiyyah*, clearly does betray the influence of Qutb, and via Qutb, Maududi, both now Salafi jihadi icons. According to Solahudin, the concept of *mulkiyah* was used by Darul Islam to justify excommunication (*takfir*) of Muslims who did not accept Darul Islam, similar to the way it is used by modern Salafi jihadi groups.\(^\text{313}\)

On the basis of Darul Islam’s use of concepts such as these, Solahudin argues that Salafi jihadi-like ideas indigenous to Darul Islam provided a receptive context for the foreign diffusion of Salafi jihadism to Indonesia. However, one could also argue that Darul Islam’s doctrinal innovation of *tauhid mulkiyah* appears to adapt a popular Qutbist concept in the service of defending Darul Islam’s long-held central doctrine: the continuing existence of Kartosoewirjo’s Islamic State of Indonesia. While Qutb’s concept of sovereignty served to make the case for the creation of an Islamic state, Kurnia’s “kingdom” made the case for the reversion to Darul Islam’s Islamic State of 1949. As Solahudin states,

> In Aceng Kurnia’s view, the manifestation of the institution of *mulkiyah* Allah in Indonesia is the Islamic State of Indonesia…. DI’s defeat in 1962 does not erase its institutional status of *mulkiyah*. It still exists, although NII for the time being is unable to establish Islamic law in Indonesia.\(^\text{314}\)

In other words, with *tauhid mulkiyah*, Kurnia had confected a jurisprudential argument for Kartosoewirjo’s Islamic State. Thus Qutbist thought inspired a new articulation of Darul Islam’s traditional ideology, rather than the adoption of Salafi jihadism as we

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\(^{313}\) Ibid.  
\(^{314}\) Ibid.
would now recognize it. Furthermore, even if tauhid mulkiyah did “give birth to a takfiri stance in DI/TII,” as Solahudin argues, takfirism does not seem to have dominated Darul Islam thinking in the way that is has the groups in the Middle East who have been labeled as such. He points to some evidence post-Aceng Kurnia that takfir was used in Darul Islam to justify fa’i operations against Muslims classified as apostates. But the use of takfir against large populations does not appear to have been a common practice in Darul Islam. As with many other groups in Islamic history, the use of takfir in Darul Islam appears to have been more limited and specifically targeted.

Such issues of interpretation notwithstanding, Solahudin shows that even before the rise of Abdullah Sungkar concepts from foreign Islamist thinkers were beginning to filter through to Darul Islam ideologues. Selective adoption of Qubt can be seen in the writings of another senior figure, Ules Sudjai, the Darul Islam special forces chief under the leadership of Adah Djaelani. In a tract he wrote in 1981 titled “A Brief History of the Islamic Fundamentalist Movement in Indonesia,” there is evidence of reading beyond traditional Darul Islam sources. Sudjai rails against Pancasila and the New Order restrictions on dakwah but he does so using a Qubtist vocabulary. He repeatedly describes the Suharto regime as a “jahiliyah” government run by “thogut”. Jahiliyah, the Qur’anic term denoting “pre-Islamic” times of barbarism and ignorance was adapted by Sayyid Qutb and applied to Egyptian society under the secular nationalist government of Gamal Abdul Nasir, which Qutb so vehemently opposed. Thogut, which traditionally referred to a pre- or anti-Islamic idol, was fashioned by Qutb into an epithet to describe any tyrannical, non-Islamic, authority. Echoing Qutb, Sudjai opposes what he sees as secular rule in Indonesia on Qur’anic grounds. “The rogues of this jahiliyah government,” he writes, “are thogut who place themselves on a level with

315 Ibid.
316 Ibid.
317 Even in Egypt after Qutb’s execution in 1967, Abdel Azim Ramadan observes that the practice of takfif among Muslim Brotherhood splinter groups inspired by Qutb was uneven: “The idea of takfif varied from one Islamic organization to another; interpretations ranged from branding the ruler alone with atheism to so branding the whole society with him.” See Abdel Azim Ramadan, “Fundamentalist Islam in Egypt: The Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Takfir Groups,” in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Polities, Economies, and Militance (University of Chicago Press, 1996), 157.
318 Khatab, Power of Sovereignty, 49.
Allah SWT, that is to say, feel they have the sovereignty to make laws and ordinances outside of the noble Qur’an.”

Also echoing Qutb, Sudjai asserts that according to the Qur’an and the Sunnah, Indonesia today is “inhabited by two types of community which are directly opposed to one another.” On one side there is what he describes as the *jahiliyah* community (“masyarakat jahiliyah”), which exists under the rule of the New Order; on the other, the Muslim community (“masyarakat Islam”). Sudjai’s writing also betrays the influence of modernist militant thought in its preoccupation with purifying the faith of unwarranted innovations not found in the Qur’an or Sunnah, known as *bid’ah*. In his critique of the *jahiliyah* community he finds their creed “full of fictions [khurafat], additional beliefs,” and their devotions “mixed with *bid’ah* that is very corrupting.”

In emphasizing the purification of faith and the rejection of mysticism, Sudjai’s writing indeed reflects the influence of puritanical Salafism. But in Sudjai, Salafism is combined with Darul Islam nationalist mythology, resulting in a curious contradiction between the purifying and anti-mystical purpose of Salafist doctrine and the mystical and millenarian tradition of Darul Islam and its founder, S.M. Kartosoewirjo. While Sudjai’s screed rails against innovations, his entire historical narrative is an apologia for Kartosoewirjo’s Islamic State of Indonesia. Nevertheless, his work confirms that from the early 1980s Darul Islam thinkers came under the influence of Salafist thought from the Middle East. Gradually, from this time, reformers in Darul Islam would seek to cleanse its ideology of what they considered to be its unfashionable Javanese millenarian and mystical past.

Foreign influence would not, however, change Darul Islam’s obsession with statehood and territory. As Sudjai argues, the existence of Kartosoewirjo’s Islamic State was to be the premise for jihad. Thus the main focus of organizing should be on the “territorial institutions” of the state, “civil as well as military.” Harking back to traditional Darul Islam notions of territory and sovereignty, Sudjai writes that territory is secured by building upon the bases of the movement. What is meant by this, he clarifies, is “control

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320 Ibid., 7.
of people, land and property; or territorial control.” ³²¹ “On Indonesian soil,” he concludes, “in reality there operates two rival governments. First: the jahiliyah government (above ground), and second: the Islamic government (that remains entirely underground).” ³²²

It fell to Abdullah Sungkar, a new recruit from a non-Darul Islam background, to pioneer a militant Islamist culture in Indonesia that was recognizably Salafi jihadi. Indeed, Sungkar appears to have been more thoroughly influenced by Qutb, the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist thought than he was by any Darul Islam doctrine. No doubt this was due to the fact that his original institutional home, DDII, had been largely responsible for translating and publishing such Salafist and Brotherhood literature, making it widely available in Indonesia from the 1970s. ³²³

Sungkar’s ideology can be seen in the anti-Pancasila argument he prosecuted in his trial, which he developed further in a series of eloquent sermons given in late 1984 and early 1985. The sermons, preserved in cassette recordings, provide a snapshot of his political thinking just prior to his going into exile. Strikingly, he spends just as much time denouncing what he considers examples of bid’ah (unwarranted innovations) in Javanese culture as he does the Suharto regime. He vehemently condemns the practice of celebrating birthdays, which he describes as a Christian ritual. He warns his audience against the traditional practice of tahlilan—the ritual of gathering to praise God at intervals after a person’s death in order to safeguard their spirit. Likewise, he targets Shi’ism and Western education as un-Islamic deviations which must be eradicated from Indonesian society. ³²⁴

Another influence on Sungkar appears to have been Ahmad Hassan, the founder of the Islamic Union (Persis), who advocated transnational pan-Islamism and rejected

³²¹ Ibid.
³²² Ibid.
³²³ Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy, “Joining the Caravan?: The Middle East, Islamism And Indonesia,” Lowy Institute Paper 05 (Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2005), 59–60
nationalism and its attributes. Sungkar, too, mocked the very concept of nationalism, a stance that put him at odds with Darul Islam’s nationalist ideology. In one sermon, Sungkar’s mocking tone draws laughter from the audience:

Why is there now a belief that our country [negara] is this country and that this country is owned by our people [bangsa]? And no one can rule it except our own people. Because of that there must be an assembly to create legislation and laws. Please! This is real idolatry, my brothers.

Sungkar’s salafist traits would become more prominent over time, especially in Malaysia, where he began to cite the puritanical Arab preacher Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, whose teachings have official status in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, just as Darul Islam influenced Sungkar in a jihadist direction, so Sungkar influenced Darul Islam in a Salafist direction. However, Sungkar’s impatience with Darul Islam’s failure to update its ideology and culture quickly enough would culminate in his founding of the breakaway group Jemaah Islamiyah.

**Usroh**

Sungkar was not just the pioneer of Salafi jihadism in Indonesia. In the 1980s he was also one of the early promotors of small study circles or *usroh*, the organizational system of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. *Usroh*, the Arabic for “family,” were closely knit study circles of between seven to ten members, formed to cultivate members’ piety at the same time as to constitute the building blocks of a movement to Islamize society. In Egypt, Richard P. Mitchell described the *usroh* model as “the real basis of the power of the Society of the Muslim Brothers,” after it was adopted in 1943. In Hasan al-Banna’s vision the tightly knit but hierarchically controlled *usroh* were for purposes of indoctrination, so that members were not just loyal to the organization but loyal to the faith. According to Mitchell, although the ultimate goal of the Brotherhood was total transformation of society or revolution, the “whole spirit of the Society … [was to believe] that the problems of Egyptian or Islamic reform could

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never be solved unless individual Egyptians or Muslims were first rehabilitated or reformed.”

Thus the usroh placed a great deal of emphasis on training its members in personal piety, on praying together and on providing one another with social support.

Usroh appears to have entered Indonesian Muslim thought in the early 1980s through campus missionary organizations. Some trace its origins in time and place to the Salman mosque at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB). One account is that mosque imam Imaduddin Abdurrahim brought the first translations of Muslim Brotherhood writings—books by Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb published in Malaysia—back to Indonesia, along with them the concept of usroh. Imaduddin pioneered his own study group system, Latihan Mujahid Dakwah, which became “the spark for the rise of Islamisation on the campuses,” according to a survey of the “mosque youth” phenomenon.

Another account notes that “the Salman Mosque ITB is recorded as the pioneer in developing the usroh system.”

Directly emerging from the dakwah program at the Salman mosque was the Badan Koordinasi Pemuda Mesjid (BKPM) which took the “mosque youth” concept and made it a national movement. Although BKPM was pioneered by Salam mosque youth like Toto Tasmara, its first chairman, from the outset it was heavily influenced by radical streams of thought, and figures like Mursalin Dahlan, also one of the Salman mosque cadres who later, under Darul Islam influence, would use BKPM as a base for recruiting young militants from around the country with the goal of Islamic revolution, as we saw in the previous chapter.

Sungkar’s adoption of usroh was another significant step in modernizing Indonesian jihadism into a movement that reflected foreign trends in militant Islamism. In their small circles, these Sungkar followers would be somewhat aloof from the traditional Darul Islam member, potentially a way to avoid conflict with the state. But just as in Egypt, the usroh were about creating an enduring network based on mutual social support.

328 Mitchell, Society of the Muslim Brothers, 200.
One of Sungkar’s recruiters, Budi Santosa, explained to an Indonesian prosecutor how a study group would be arranged. At a local mosque, at the conclusion of a general study session the most diligent students would be approached, cultivated and eventually asked to join an *usroh*. At an early *usroh* meeting the new member would be given a manual which served as the primary text for the group. Then, according to Santosa, it would be explained that

*Usroh* is an organization based on the Muslim family, which is bound by mutual recognition, knowledge, Muslims helping each other … they have to help each other until they constitute a Muslim family, [and] from a Muslim family until [they constitute] a Muslim society that is blessed by Allah [diridlo Allah], that is, a society that has faith in God’s Law so that Islam will be realized comprehensively in Indonesia.

In an *usroh* manual found in the case file of Wiyono alias M. Sidiq, a thirty-three-year-old goldsmith living in Solo, members were given detailed instructions on the purpose of the group and how to conduct their weekly activities. Under the rubric of “brotherhood” members were to adhere to the following instructions:

- Visit members who are sick
- Assist members who need help
- Offer congratulations to members who achieve a success
- Offer condolences in death
- Give compensation/benefits to family members who suffer hardship
- Strengthen the ties of friendship

In Sungkar’s *usroh*, as in the Muslim Brotherhood, the penultimate stage of the movement, the purpose of all the study and education (*tarbiyah*), was jihad. “Without jihad,” the manual states, “the objectives of knowledge and education are made meaningless because jihad is the climax of the process of developing the character of the Muslim.”

Another section indicates that jihad is interpreted broadly to include

331 Budi Santosa testimony in Wiyono alias Muhammad Sidik, Pengadilan Negeri Surakarta, 125/1986 B.
332 Budi Santosa in Wiyono case.
334 Ibid., 2.
“Jihad in education,” “Jihad with body and soul for the greatness of Islam,” and “Jihad in politics.”\textsuperscript{335} While these objectives sound innocuous enough, in case there were any doubt that the usroh promoted radical ideas, the list of reading recommendations directs members to books by al-Maududi and Sayyid Qutb.\textsuperscript{336}

The transnational diffusion of Muslim Brotherhood thought to Indonesia at this juncture, in the mid-1980s, appears to have been very much an incomplete process, mediated by the writings that had been translated into Indonesian from the original Arabic, and published as whole books, or as in the case of the usroh, edited into pamphlets to be photocopied and circulated to members. Working with what was available to him, Sungkar thus created his own jihadist fusion. He took the spirit of Kartosoewirjo’s jihad against the secular Republic, the puritanism of the Salafis, and the cell structure and recruitment practices of the Brotherhood to form his own unique synthesis. But he was not just borrowing, he was also adapting, rejecting ideas that he disagreed with. We have seen that he rejected Darul Islam’s nationalism. But he also explicitly rejected the Muslim Brotherhood’s accommodation of parliamentary politics, which he considered illegitimate.\textsuperscript{337}

Statements the usroh recruits later gave to the authorities reflected Sungkar’s ideological bricolage at the time. Fragmentary and sometimes contradictory influences were underpinned by a loyalty to Sungkar and desire to live according to Islamic law. When it came to political readings, recruits commonly referred to three sources of influence: \textit{Ar-Risalah/Al-Ikhwan}, the underground magazine produced by the Yogyakata mosque youth; \textit{Yaum Al-Quds}, a magazine distributed freely to Ngruki by the Iranian embassy; and \textit{Perjalanan Hukum Di Indonesia: Sebuah Gugatan}, the edited volume of Ba’asyir and Sungkar’s defense statements at their 1982 trial.\textsuperscript{338}

Budi Santosa, the deputy usroh coordinator for Surakarta, gives an enlightening account of what these texts meant to him. \textit{Al-Ikhwan}, he says, contains examples of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[335] Ibid., 6.
\item[336] Ibid., 21.
\item[338] For example, Budi Santosa interrogation in Wiyono case, 5-6.
\end{footnotes}
government’s weaknesses, “and with knowing the government’s weaknesses it will increase the zeal for syari’ah Islam.” *Yaum Al-Quds*, he explains, relates Iranian Muslims’ zeal for struggle, “and the success of their struggle will also inspire [our] enthusiasm, in the hope we can succeed like Iran.” Finally, of *Perjalanan Hukum*, he says, by understanding the weakness of the rule of law in Indonesia, “automatically we know also the weakness of man-made law.”

Budi Santosa, like other recruits, told the authorities that the *usroh* taught that to respect the Indonesian flag, a piece of cloth, constituted *kemusyrikan*, or idol-worship. Another recruit, Wayono Syafei, a thirty-four-year-old teacher at an Islamic boarding school (*madrasah*) in Sukoharjo, spoke of reading material which taught that the *jemaah* (community) is anti-nationalist and that “the *jemaah* will enter heaven but nationalism will enter hell.” But how was this anti-nationalism reconciled with the legacy of religious nationalism bestowed by Kartosoewirjo and his Islamic State? How did recruits see the red-over-white Darul Islam flag with its crescent moon and star? Moreover, how was Sungkar and Ba’asyir’s increasingly puritanical Salafism reconciled with the Shiite Islam propagated by the Iranian embassy, Shiism being anathema to Salafism?

The answer, perhaps, is that the synthesis Sungkar sought to cultivate in his followers was a work in progress. New ideas were allowed to agglomerate in the service of inspiring a fresh movement of dissident youth loyal to Sungkar and Ba’asyir. A kind of bricolage ideology inspired the *usroh* youth. At this time also, the name Jemaah Islamiyah appears in court documents interchangeably with “*usroh*”.

Sungkar’s recruits, even at this early stage, appear to have been followers of Sungkar’s movement, whatever one called it, more than they were “citizens” of Darul Islam’s Islamic State.

In his recruitment during the height of the repression of the 1980s, Sungkar had thus already begun to play a longer, more strategic game of resistance to the Indonesian state. He consolidated his forces and turned toward private religious study, years before

340 Wayono Syafei interrogation in Wiyono case.
341 Wiyono interrogation in Budi Santosa case, p. 11.
he would leave Darul Islam to establish Jemaah Islamiyah. He distanced himself from the risky and under-resourced acts of rebellion conducted by Darul Islam activists. For these purposes, the Brotherhood’s *usroh* system may have been a particular inspiration. As Mitchell observes, although the revolutionary and violent potential of the Brotherhood apparatus was the source of much consternation for the Egyptian government, in their statements al-Banna and his replacement, Hudaybi, rejected drastic measures against the state. Although they were somewhat ambiguous as to their stance on revolution, they emphasized the need to socialize the principles of Brotherhood teachings gradually, through the *usroh* system, before society would be ready for political change. This point, Mitchell observes,

remained the essence of the official position throughout Banna’s time and especially in Hudaybi’s: the principal role of the Society was to be one of education (*tarbiyyah*) of the people to the truth; ‘when the people have been Islamized, a truly Muslim nation will naturally evolve.’

Sungkar’s turn to *usroh*, however, did not save his recruits from eventual detection and arrest by the Indonesian authorities. Far from being the ideal cell structure in which the connections between groups up and down the hierarchy were limited in order to prevent easy disruption, Sungkar’s *usroh* movement was highly centralized with at least group leaders required to swear an oath (*bai’at*) to Ba’asyir or Sungkar and to attend meetings at Ngruki to report their activities. But the price of greater control over recruits was easy detection. In the early to mid-1980s, hundreds of Sungkar’s followers would be arrested and detained by the authorities.

**Conclusion**

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the Darul Islam movement was thoroughly out-maneuvered and disrupted by a Suharto regime that saw political Islam as its greatest threat. Its poorly planned and resourced conspiracies against the Indonesian state only ended in failure and more repression. For Islamists more generally, caught between

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343 Budi Santosa interrogation in Wiyono case, 11.
cooptation and repression, there was little hope at the time for organized opposition to the New Order.

In this bleak political climate Abdullah Sungkar rose to the fore as an innovative, articulate, and charismatic Islamist leader and thinker. By introducing his own Salafi jihadist synthesis of Middle Eastern and Indonesian ideology, he transformed Indonesian jihadist thinking. He also sought to consolidate a resistance movement, developing cadres through training, avoiding confrontation with the state now for the promise of jihad in the future.

In recruiting his own following and forging his own ideology, Sungkar’s served to deterritorialize Indonesian jihadism by discarding its fixation on Kartosoewirjo’s Islamic State. The organizational names he began to use during this period, such as usroh and Jemaah Islamiyah (the study-circle-as-family and the Muslim Community), unlike those of Darul Islam, were flexible concepts and universal models of Islamic organization, open to Muslims of any country and background. Thus, even before he went into exile, Sungkar prepared the way ideologically for a jihadist movement that would transcend Indonesia and align its followers with jihadist movements elsewhere in the Muslim world. This ideological rescaling of Indonesian jihadism prefigured its geographical rescaling, and was an important early stage in the process leading to regional assemblage.
Depending on where you live, to escape your immediate circumstances you might “run for the hills.” Hill tribes in mainland Southeast Asia, as James Scott illustrates in *The Art of Not Being Governed*, preserve societies that elude the authority of the modern state. In the fragmented world of island Southeast Asia, however, you might just as easily run for the seas. Such was the course of Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, who in 1985 smuggled themselves onto a boat and sailed across the Malacca Strait to Malaysia.

In seeking to evade repression in Indonesia they led the transnationalization of Indonesian jihadism. In studies of civil war and insurgency, it is commonly observed that while rebels are able to evade the power of the state by crossing to a neighbouring country, states themselves are radically constrained by the internationally recognized borders that contain them. In *Rebels Without Borders*, Idean Salehyan notes that as a consequence of such asymmetry, “in a large share of civil conflicts, rebels seek resources and mobilization opportunities outside the territory of the state—and rebellion becomes transnational.” Even better if the neighbouring location is close enough to facilitate coordination of the movement back home.

There is no indication that Sungkar ever intended to create a region-wide network of Southeast Asia jihadists. His emigration was caused by the “push factor” of Indonesian repression and after emigrating he remained focused on overthrowing Suharto and establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia. But I argue that where Sungkar fled to was decisive in shaping his movement and contributing to a process of regional assemblage. Sungkar moved from inland Java, at the edge of the Southeast Asian archipelago, to an area near the historical centre of the Malay world, located at the tip of peninsula Malaysia—an area that I call the “Malacca hinterland” (see map). In doing so, Sungkar effectively shifted the headquarters of his movement to a historic zone of cosmopolitan

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convergence where in earlier times Sultans and European colonisers alike sought a strategic base from which to control their regional networks.

Over time, Sungkar’s movement would form the main network in an assemblage shaped by the fluid geography of maritime Southeast Asia—a disparate seascape that lends itself not to territorially based insurgencies like Darul Islam, but to the formation of amorphous and distributed political networks like the great Srivijaya empire of the 8th century, which spanned the Malacca Strait and reached remote islands beyond. Sungkar’s network also spanned the strait, connecting his persecuted followers in Java with his new recruits in Malaysia. From there the network would expand further still, spurred by the rapidly modernising and Islamising international hub that was Malaysia of the 1980s and 1990s.

**Hijrah**

In 1985 Sungkar and Ba’asyir escaped Suharto’s Indonesia with some help, some luck and a little misdirection. According to Adung (alias Sunarto), Sungkar’s aid who was designated leader of the escape plot (Amir Perjalanan), on March 3, the morning after the summons to attend court to hear the outcome of their appeal process, Sungkar called a briefing at Ngruki to inform his staff that he would be attending court and that he would accept the judge’s decision. He told his staff to prepare for the possibility that he and Ba’asyir would be sent to jail again. Prior to his announcement, however, in a discussion with their inner circle, Sungkar and Ba’asyir were advised that they should not obey an infidel court; they should evade the authorities, or at the very least let the authorities come to Ngruki and take them by force, as this would be more principled in the eyes of God. They settled on a strategy of evasion, imagined in Islamic idiom as a *hijrah* or “flight,” which, on the model of Muhammad according to the Qur’an, indicates a temporary strategic withdrawal. Malaysia not yet on the horizon, their objective was to safely escape Central Java.

Adung’s first and most important task as *hijrah* organiser was to divert the covert intelligence operatives who were thick on the ground around the pesantren and who were known to tail Sungkar everywhere he went. A safe house owned by one of their

followers in a non-descript side street in Solo was designated. Then, Adung followed Sungkar as he left Ngruki to visit his wife across town to say farewell. While Sungkar said goodbye to his family, Adung kept lookout, monitoring the operatives who had followed them. By way of a third-person courier he sent a note to Sungkar to take the main road back to Ngruki on his way home. When Sungkar eventually departed, Adung followed and then overtook him, while the operatives followed further behind, presumably expecting Sungkar to return to the pesantren. But suddenly, at a predetermined point Adung pulled off into a side street and into the safe house, Sungkar closely following him. Later that day Ba’asyir came with a car and his driver. That evening, says Adung, they were blessed by a heavy downpour, which obscured their escape to the highway that would take them to the provincial capital of Semarang. In Semarang they changed cars, leaving Ba’asyir’s driver to return to Solo, and continued on to Jakarta, taking a circuitous route through the West Java capital of Bandung.348

While hiding out in Jakarta news reached them of the fallout from their escape. They heard that the courtroom had been packed with onlookers and members of the security services awaiting their arrival. On realizing that Sungkar and Ba’asyir had failed to attend, officers were sent directly to Ngruki to conduct a search of the premises and, according to Adung, his own home was raided and “turned inside out.”349 The three would spend the next six weeks laying low Jakarta, while the authorities, expecting Sungkar to appear in Surabaya for one of his scheduled sermons, focused their manhunt on the wrong city. While hiding in Jakarta Sungkar spent some of the time recording sermons to cassette tapes to be distributed underground, in conscious emulation of Ayatollah Khomeini, whose recorded critiques of the Shah had helped to mobilize supporters and prepare the ground for revolution in Iran in 1979.350

Apparently it was during this time in Jakarta that Sungkar and Ba’asyir began to consider seeking refuge in Malaysia. The idea came from Sungkar’s idol, Muhammad Natsir. Although they had parted ways organizationally, Sungkar and Natsir had remained close personally. Natsir also offered to help them find safe passage from

349 Ibid.
350 Ibid. It is not known whether the Sungkar tapes were ever distributed.
Indonesia to Malaysia, drawing on his network of contacts in both countries. Sungkar accepted, and immediately, others wanted to join him. Around ten other militants would take part in the initial emigration, spurred by the post-Tanjung Priok massacre crackdown on Islamist preachers. The most notable of these included the Mosque Youth Communication Body (BKPM) activists, Abu Jibril and Muchliansyah, both of whom would go on to become important figures in Jemaah Islamiyah.\(^{351}\)

On March 10, Sungkar, Ba’asyir and a small party, including Adung and two guides paid for by Natsir, left Jakarta for Malaysia. They planned to reach their destination via one of the illicit routes across the Malacca Strait commonly used by smugglers and migrant workers. First, from the port of Merak, they caught a ferry from Java to Sumatra. Then, in convoy, they went north by road through the Sumatra countryside in the direction of the strait, buying food along the way and stopping to eat only when they found an isolated section of forest.\(^{352}\) By evening they had reached the port of Tanjung Balai on the North Sumatera coast, facing the Malacca Strait. While they gathered at a local hotel, their guides hired a traditional boat (prau) with an outboard motor. That evening the group boarded the prau and set sail for Malaysia. It is hard to ascertain the names of all the passengers on the trip, but Sungkar and Ba’asyir appear to have been joined by a surprisingly diverse bunch of Muslim opposition activists. They included Hilmi Bakar Almascaty, well known in post-Suharto Indonesia as a leader of the vigilante group, Islamic Defenders Front, and Abdullah Hehamahua, a Muslim student leader who in 2013 would serve as a member of the advisory board of Indonesia’s anti-corruption commission.\(^{353}\) Adung recalls that just before dawn prayers, after a troubled journey during which the motor of the prau repeatedly failed, they reached Pulau Ketam in Malaysia, a small underdeveloped island located off Port Klang, Malaysia’s busiest sea port. The group was wet and seasick. But Natsir had arranged for them to be met with transport and a change of dry clothes. After a short trip to Bandar Baru Bangi, a town on the outskirts of the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, they were ensconced in a safe house.

\(^{351}\) Ibid.


\(^{353}\) Interview with Muhsin Sukandar, Solo, July 24, 2010.
After a month of hiding in Bandar Baru Bangi most of the group were able to obtain Malaysian identity cards with new names, making their *hijrah* complete. In Malaysia, Abdullah Sungkar would be known as Abdul Halim bin Ali and Ba’asyir as Abdus Somad. According to Ba’asyir, it was Muhammad Natsir’s close connection with future Malaysian deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, then a senior minister in the Mahathir government, that allowed them to settle in Malaysia so easily, and to be granted residency visas. Supporting the Indonesian dissidents was also convenient politics at that time in Malaysia. Prime Minister Mahathir, for his part, was keen to be seen as pro-Islam so as to not be out-flanked by Islamist opposition party, PAS. At the same time, he was happy to undermine Suharto, his regional rival.354 “In fact,” says Ba’asyir, in explanation of the fortunate political circumstances, “at that time, according to Dato’ Anwar Ibrahim, the Malaysian government would close its eyes to our arrival but in principle give us some leeway because back then the Malaysian government and Mahathir were not in agreement with Suharto.”355

Although their emigration to Malaysia was seamless, and might now be seen as an obvious move, at the time it was not quite inevitable that Sungkar and Ba’asyir would reposition their movement to the strategic Malacca hinterland. Muhammad Natsir, the person who had first suggested and then arranged the emigration, had in fact proposed that Sungkar and Ba’asyir only pass through Malaysia before going into exile in Saudi Arabia. Saudi, he reasoned, was further from Indonesia and thus safer from the Suharto regime. Also, Abdullah Sungkar spoke fluent Arabic and had extended family in the country. But the pair were more concerned with building their movement against Suharto than with their own safety. So they chose to live in nearby Malaysia, trading safety in return for ease of communication and coordination with Indonesia. As Ba’asyir recalls:

Indeed the late Muhammad Natsir suggested we live in Saudi because there it’s safer and further away. But we decided to choose Malaysia. Our reasoning was that we could continue our struggle against the sole basis


[secular Pancasila ideology] … and that we could stay in touch with our brothers in Indonesia, the distance not being so far.\textsuperscript{356}

Having settled on Malaysia, again it was Muhammad Natsir, via his contacts, who introduced the duo to a suitable Malaysian host: Hashim Ghani, an outspoken Salafi preacher who led the Ittiba Us Sunnah madrasah, just outside the small rural town of Kuala Pilah, about an hour south of Kuala Lumpur, in the state of Negeri Sembilan. Conveniently, Negeri Sembilan, where both Sungkar and Ba’asyir would live through to the 1990s, placed them in the south of the Malay peninsula, within easy reach of both the national capital airport and the coastal sea ports, lying, as it does, in the hinterland of Malacca. Singapore, the modern-day inheritor of Malacca’s status as the region’s preeminent commercial hub, lies not far south of this hinterland. With the emigration of Sungkar, Ba’asyir and others to this area in the mid-1980s, the centre of the Indonesian jihadist movement was effectively transplanted to a zone of cosmopolitan hubs that have been strategic locations in the region’s political and trading networks at least since the time when local Sultans clashed with Portuguese and Dutch colonisers.

But it is not clear how much, if at all, Sungkar and Ba’asyir were conscious of having relocated to a space that would allow them to network across the region more easily. More parochially, they appear to have been attracted to Kuala Pilah by the presence of Ittiba Us Sunnah founder Hashim Ghani’s Salafism and welcoming pan-Islamism. Ghani, a student of the Egyptian reformist scholar Muhammad Abduh, and closely aligned with the puritanical Indonesian teacher Ahmad Hassan, has declared his goal was to “support the concept of Salafism based on the Qur’an and the Sunnah in this country especially and also in the struggle of salafi colleagues around the world generally.”\textsuperscript{357}

Salafism, furthermore, had a long history in Kuala Pilah. In the 1930s the town had emerged as the Malaysian base for modernist Islamic scholars from West Sumatra, followers of what was known in those years as the “Kaum Muda” (Young Group)

\textsuperscript{356} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{357} Ghani, Gayung Bersambut, 8.
These reformist ulama were influenced by Egyptian salafism to purify Malaysian Islam from what they saw as the corruption of the Malay Sultans and other traditional Islamic authorities. Ittiba Us Sunnah, which became known for its crash courses in Qur’anic translation, has regularly clashed with the local Islamic authorities since this time to the very present, with its strict rejection of the adherence to any one of the mainstream schools of Islamic thought (mazhab), a practice which it considers “deviant and haram.”

Sungkar and Ba’asyir, also followers of Ahmad Hassan and Salafist doctrine, found themselves a local ally in Hashim Ghani, who helped them to settle into their adopted country. His son, Hazim Ghani explains, “We were sympathetic to them because they were fugitives, hunted by their own government … Lots of people over there [in Indonesia] were being disappeared in the middle of the night, killed by the government.” Hashim Ghani found the Indonesians a house to rent in the Kampung Parit, an unassuming village on the edge of Kuala Pilah, and thereafter Ba’asyir and Sungkar began to teach occasionally at Ittiba Us Sunnah. Although their teachings, combining Salafism with Darul Islam militancy, were rather radical even in that context, they found a receptive audience in 1980s Malaysia, where the Muslim community held Indonesian Muslim scholars in high regard.

During this period, the Indonesians introduced a jihadist culture to the Salafist school. There, former Jemaah Islamiyah commander, Nasir Abas, first learnt about jihad and the heroic struggle of the mujahidin in Afghanistan at the feet of Ba’asyir and Sungkar. He recalls how he borrowed or bought books from the Indonesians on the topics of “jihad law” and the “jihad stories of the prophet Muhammad.” According to Abas, while Sungkar and Ba’asyir promoted the cause of foreigners joining the Afghan jihad

360 Interview with Hazman Hashim, July 1, 2010.
362 Nasir Abas, Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah: Pengakuan Mantan Anggota JI (Jakarta: Grafindo Khazanah Ilmu, 2005), 30.
(something he would later do), Hasyim Ghani was of the view that the obligation to wage jihad in Afghanistan was already fulfilled by the Afghan people.\textsuperscript{363}

**Malaysia’s nexus position**

Indonesian jihadists sought out Malaysia as a safe haven, which, due to the region’s fluid borders, would allow easy access back to Indonesia. But as a place of modernizing and highly networked cities, located on a peninsula that extends so far southwards that it is spatially both of the mainland and of the archipelago, Malaysia would serve as the perfect nexus with neighboring countries and the world beyond. Social movements are inevitably influenced by the places they inhabit. In his survey of the geography of social movements, Paul Routledge argues for the importance of geographical context, given the central role place plays in shaping the claims, identities and capacities of political actors.\textsuperscript{364} In the case of Malaysia, it introduced Indonesian jihadists to the Muslim world at large, reorienting them from their narrow national outlook to an international, pan-Islamist one. Accordingly, their political grievances would shift scale too: from the imposition of Pancasila secularism in Indonesia to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In many ways, Malaysia was a transnational space ideally suited to growing the region’s first transnational jihadist movement.

One of the early ways in which Indonesian jihadism was changed by its new geography was the induction of Malaysians into Darul Islam—the first non-Indonesians to join a group. After settling in Malaysia, Sungkar and Ba’asyir obtained a license to preach, known in Malaysia as a tauliah, and began proselytizing widely in the peninsula at mosques and surau (prayer halls). Ba’asyir recalls that he and Sungkar offered students a two-track system of pengajian or Islamic study. The first track was a public study group (pengajian umum), conducted openly at mosques, in which the topics were “just the light stuff” and which served as the preachers’ entre into the local community. The second track was a private, special group (pengajian khusus), in which more radical material would be covered, ideally leading to the recruitment of those students who seemed the most enthusiastic. “In the special study group,” according to Ba’asyir, “we

\textsuperscript{363} Ibid.

conducted a kind of caderization [recruitment of a cadre] in order to sow consciousness of jihad.” They were so successful, claims Ba’asyir, in attracting “Malaysian youth with jihadi consciousness” that some of these recruits “went on to Afghanistan and much else besides.”

Recruitment success in Malaysia was welcome, but it was Sungkar’s efforts to maintain his following in Indonesia at the same time that created a truly transnational movement. To this end, Muzahar Muhtar (alias Taslim), one of the passengers on Sungkar’s hijrah, was designated the “silah” (link) between the community in Malaysia and the communities in Indonesia (mostly in Jakarta and Central Java). His jobs included guiding those who would make the illicit journey over land and water from Indonesia to Malaysia and couriering messages back and forth.

In an unlucky turn of events for the movement, however, Muhtar was arrested by the Indonesian authorities in 1986. He was arrested in connection with a crime committed by two members of the Sungkar network, former gangsters, who had murdered another member over a debt. It was only in the course of interrogating Muhtar that the Indonesian authorities discovered he was part of a network of Indonesian Muslim militants that had spread to Malaysia. When asked by the authorities why Sungkar and his followers had fled to Malaysia, Muhtar gave three reasons. First, he said that Sungkar, Ba’asyir, Abu Jibril and other leaders had felt they were hunted by the authorities in Indonesia. Second, they sought to work in Malaysia to accumulate funds for Darul Islam. Third, Muhtar claimed, they intended to organise some kind of physical force.

Although Muhtar’s account must be treated with care given that it was likely produced under duress, it provides a valuable sense of the political atmosphere of the time for Sungkar and other Muslim activists. It serves as a reminder that the Suharto regime crackdown on radical Muslims in the 1980s helped to displace a significant part of the Indonesian militant movement to Malaysia. Sungkar and Ba’asyir were not the only Muslims seeking refuge from the Indonesian authorities. A sizable radical fringe of the

366 Berta Acara Pemeriksaan Muzahar Muhtar alias Musa, Section 3, p. 6.
Muslim community in Indonesia, including “mosque youth” activists, radical preachers, and others simply caught up in the repression following the Tanjun Priok incident of 1984, were under pressure or on the run, and many of them found their way to Malaysia in the mid- to late 1980s.

Muhtar’s second point, the accumulation of funds, indicates an additional reason that Malaysia was an attractive safe haven for Indonesian jihadists. Just as Malaysia drew Indonesian migrant workers due to its higher-wage jobs and more highly valued currency, so it attracted jihadists seeking to raise money, not just for their families, but also for the movement. As an example of how fundraising was conducted, Muzahar Muhtar tells his interrogators of Asmadi Ali Usman, a Malaysian building contractor who was a sympathizer of Darul Islam. Usman organised with Sungkar to provide labouring jobs for a number of Indonesian brothers, who were to be brought across the strait by Muhtar.367 In the 1990s, as we shall see, Malaysia’s role as a region for fundraising would become central to Jemaah Islamiyah’s territorial strategy.

Muhtar’s third point appears to be a reference to Sungkar’s aforementioned strategic “long game”: to avoid conflict with the Suharto regime in the present in favour of building a force to challenge it in the future. Thus Sungkar encouraged his recruits to acquire military training, characterised as the religious duty of i’dad, or preparation. Such an agenda was conveniently served by the war against the Soviet Union that was unfolding in the mid-1980s in Afghanistan. Moreover, it appears to have been another consequence of the relocation to Malaysia that Indonesian jihadists became readily involved, early on, in the Afghanistan “jihad.” But also early on, from their position in Malaysia, they saw options for military training closer to home in Southeast Asia.

Not long after their arrival in Malaysia, Sungkar and Ba’asyir began to explore sending students for overseas jihad and training. The interrogation of Syaroni (alias Ahmad Hikmat), a Jakarta gangster and Darul Islam recruit who sought refuge in Malaysia after the murder that had accidentally exposed the network, records early observations that foreign military training had become a priority for the Indonesian exiles. Having returned to Jakarta and been arrested for the murder, Syaroni told the Indonesian

367 Ibid.
authorities that in Malaysia Abdullah Sungkar conducted regular dawn study circles (pengajian subuh), which dealt with the following two issues: first, the Islamic State of Indonesia must continue the struggle against the Indonesian Republic, because the latter was not based on “pure Islamic law”; and second, [the need to] “send Islamic State of Indonesia members to Moro [Southern Philippines], Afghanistan, Pattani [Southern Thailand], and elsewhere along with the need to assist the struggle for Islam in those Muslim countries.”

Ba’asyir himself confirms that early on the opportunity for military training was associated not just with Afghanistan but also with conflict zones in Southeast Asia. Asked why people were sent for training in Afghanistan, Ba’asyir says that it was due to Sungkar’s understanding of the “obligations of jihad and i’dad.” Although military training was primarily to prepare for the fight in Indonesia, according to Ba’asyir, Sungkar emphasised that i’dad may have wider, more regional, applications. “I’dad can be applied to jihad anywhere,” he said. “[That is,] wherever jihad might be possible, for example in the Southern Philippines … or in Thailand.”

Although it would be some years before Darul Islam would send militants to the Southern Philippines, the experience of exile in Malaysia caused a historic shift in Indonesian jihadism towards greater pan-Islamist identification and transnational action. Coincidentally, the Indonesians found themselves in a Malaysia of the 1980s that was beset by two globalising trends not seen in Indonesia to the same extent. First, rising pan-Islamism. Second, Malaysia’s drive to position itself as a rapidly globalising and modernising regional centre, in competition with Singapore as a regional transportation and communication hub. Located centrally in the archipelago, Malaysia was connected to Singapore by a causeway, and to the major capitals of the Muslim world by frequent air travel.

Add to this context the greatest pan-Islamist cause of the 20th century, the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. For Muhsin Ashin, a Darul Islam member who

368 Berita Acara Pemeriksaan Muzahar Muhtar, Section 1, p. 8.
travelled by boat with Sungkar and Ba’asyir and who stayed with them in Bandar Baru Bangar, it was living in Malaysia at such a historical juncture that widened his horizons:

When we were in Malaysia by chance the issue of the Afghan Mujahidin was real and hot and became an idiom of struggle. There they had a plan, the conditions and the will to access the network, and the information in order to go over there [to Afghanistan], so only in Malaysia was all that conceived.\(^{370}\)

Sidney Jones also notes the significance of Malaysia as a transnational space for jihadists, observing that Malaysia during the 1980s was much more open to international influences than Indonesia: “Malaysia under Mahathir was outward-looking, rhetorically anti-Western, and open to virtually every Muslim guerrilla group and liberation movement in the world. It helped that any Muslim could enter the country without a visa.”\(^{371}\) Indeed, Malaysia played for Darul Islam almost exactly the same role as it did for the Free Aceh Movement, at almost exactly the same point in history. As Ed Aspinall summarizes it in his definitive study of the Aceh rebellion, for Acehnese rebels, “Malaysia provided a place of refuge; a source of finances, weapons and recruits; and a window onto the wider world.”\(^{372}\)

In fact, Malaysia was a haven for militants from conflict zones across the region, including Southern Thailand, the Southern Philippines and Aceh. For the Acehnese rebels, a movement that has its origins in a local Darul Islam uprising in Aceh in the 1950s, Malaysia was a site of resource mobilization that sustained the movement during the 1980s, when the New Order was at the height of its power over Aceh.\(^{373}\) The Aceh conflict, and in a lesser way, Darul Islam under Sungkar, recalls the thesis of Idean Salehyan that neighbouring countries typically play a significant role in sustaining cross-border conflict, a pattern Salehyan observers most commonly in cases of civil war.\(^{374}\) Antje Missbach observes this phenomenon in her work on the Acehnese

\(^{370}\) Muhsin Ahsin, personal communication, July 27, 2013.


\(^{373}\) Ibid.

diaspora. She concludes that the Acehnese diaspora, headquartered in Sweden but located predominantly in Malaysia, played both a role in prolonging the conflict, and, ultimately, in ending it.\textsuperscript{375} The Free Aceh Movement (GAM), just like Darul Islam, experienced Malaysia as a transformative transnational space. Missbach observes that Malaysia, “as the main hub from which the Acehnese moved to other places, carrying the germs of diasporicity with them – was the birthplace of the Acehnese diaspora.”\textsuperscript{376} Indeed, with the presence of the Free Aceh Movement and Darul Islam in Malaysia, the Soeharto regime was fortunate that the two movements kept a distance from one another. GAM was in fact a regional exception to the pattern of Muslim militant movements increasingly turning towards pan-Islamist ideology at end of the twentieth century. Under the leadership of Hassan di Tiro, GAM had moved instead in a more secular direction, playing down Islamic identity as part of a strategy to seek Western support for Acehnese independence.\textsuperscript{377}

The broadening of Darul Islam horizons appears to have shifted the movement towards a more militant pan-Islamist way of conceptualising its struggle. Malaysia, provided a shortcut in this process, serving as a “bridge” to the global ummah. The dual functions played by Malaysia as both safe haven and bridge to the wider Muslim world is captured in the recollections of Abdullah Hehamahua, a militant who fled Indonesian on the same boat that carried Ba’asyir and Sungkar in 1985. He emphasises that at the time Muslim activists in Jakarta and Java, just like their counterparts in Aceh, were on the back foot, especially since the crackdown following the Tanjung Priok massacre:

After that incident [Tanjung Priok], there were mass arrests of preachers and Muslim activists. Because the situation wasn’t conducive, I along with several friends fled [“berhijrah”] to Malaysia with the aim of continuing our struggle. Together with friends we networked with Muslim fighters from the other side of the world who had gathered in that


\textsuperscript{376} Ibid., 23.

neighbouring country. At that time Malaysia was very welcoming to the downtrodden of the Muslim world.  

In the 1980s, Malaysian government policy contributed to this sympathetic environment. At a time when Suharto’s Indonesia was repressing Muslim preachers, Malaysia, under the leadership of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and in response to the global revival of Islam since the Iranian revolution, was going through a process of Islamic revival. In the 1980s Mahathir created a new bureaucracy, the Department of Islamic Development, Islamized the education system, created an international Islamic university, and in 1984 created Malaysia’s first Islamic bank. Thus, Joseph Liow concludes:

Mahathir assumed office in July, 1981, as the Islamic resurgence reached its peak internationally with the success of the Iranian Revolution and the increasing popularity (at least in the Muslim world) of the Afghan Mujahideen resistance against Soviet occupation. Mahathir reacted immediately to this changing environment by making a conscious decision to Islamize the government.  

Mahathir Islamized Malaysia’s foreign policy, too. As Shanti Nair observes, throughout the 1980s Malaysia “sought to identify itself with international Muslim issues and as an activist member of the global Islamic community. Both Government and UMNO rhetoric increasingly referred to Malaysia as an Islamic nation and to UMNO itself as the third largest Islamic party in the world.”

Likewise, Nair observes that the Muslim youth movement in Malaysia was deeply affected by the mood of Islamic revivalism and international Muslim solidarity. The Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement, ABIM, was at the forefront of such efforts, with its leader Anwar Ibrahim becoming an increasingly well-known figure in foreign political circles. Anwar had been recruited into the government in 1982 as part of the Mahathir’s Islamization program. It was in his capacity as a minister that we have


380 Shanti Nair, Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy (London: Routledge, 1997), 80.
already seen his assistance to Sungkar and Ba’asyir in their relocation to Malaysia. But even before then, he and ABIM were dedicated to foreign Muslim causes. The ABIM organ, Risalah, according to Nair, “accorded great attention to Islamic developments outside Malaysia—issues such as the fate of the oppressed Muslim minorities in the Soviet Union, China, Thailand and the Philippines….” Citing press reports at the time, Nair notes that Anwar Ibrahim was reported to have made a visit to the Afghan border in 1980 to deliver M$50,000 to the rebels and demand publicly that the Malaysian government send troops and volunteers to support the mujahidin.

Just as in Sungkar’s flight to Malaysia, Sungkar’s mentor Muhammad Natsir played a crucial brokerage role in connecting Sungkar to the wider Muslim world. Crucially, it appears to have been Natsir’s former personal secretary, Abdul Wahid Kadungga, then based in the Netherlands, who in 1985 travelled to Pakistan and Afghanistan to meet with the mujahidin and then, subsequently went via Malaysia to visit Sungkar and Ba’asyir on his way to Indonesia. Although Kadungga was a DDII activist, he also had strong Darul Islam credentials as a son-in-law of the leader of the Darul Islam rebellion in South Sulawesi in the 1950s, Kahar Muzakkar. According to one account, in Afghanistan or Pakistan Kadungga had met with some of the key jihadists, including Abdullah Azzam and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. In Malaysia he brought with him the news that Azzam had opened an office, the Maktab Al-Khidmat (Services Bureau), which facilitated the recruitment of foreign fighters to the jihad in Afghanistan. He added that Sayyaf had collaborated with Azzam to open a program of military training (tadrib askary) specifically for foreigners. According to this account, the news was met enthusiastically by Sungkar, who at that moment decided to send cadre to Afghanistan as a way of strengthening his movement.

Subsequently, Ba’asyir and Sungkar made a trip to pave the way for a Darul Islam military training program in South Asia. Again, Muhammad Natsir was a key broker of

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381 Ibid., 71.
382 Ibid.
383 Solahudin, *NII sampai JI: Salafy Jihadisme di Indonesia* (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2011), 201. For his part, Wadungga claims that he did visit Sungkar in Malaysia but did not play any important role in the movement: “They offered to induct me. Of course, I wasn’t interested because their movement had already been infiltrated by the intelligence services.” See “Gerakan Ba’asyir Dipenuhi Intelijen,” *Gatra*, January 16, 2003.
their transnational relationships. With a letter of introduction penned by Natsir, the pair were able to meet with the former Saudi ambassador to Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur and secure renewable visas to Saudi Arabia, free of charge. Their intention was to seek funding for Southeast Asian mujahidin from wealthy Saudi philanthropists, just as the Afghan mujahidin had done. But before reaching Saudi, they made a stopover in Karachi, Pakistan to strike a deal with the mujahidin commander who was most likely to host foreign fighters. In Ba’asyir’s recollection of it, they emphasised the desire to contribute to the jihad in Afghanistan, as opposed to their primary motive, which was more parochial. According to Ba’asyir:

Before Saudi, we stopped over in Karachi to meet Sheikh Abdul Rasul Sayyaf until we succeeded in discussing our doing something to help the cause. We would send some mujahidin to Afghanisan to wage jihad over there to assist the jihadi struggle.384

Ba’asyir was asked if meeting Sayyaf did anything to change his thinking at the time. His answer was that, “after meeting with Sheikh Sayyaf of course our determination to wage jihad was greater.” In addition to this inspiration, it appears the deal included an agreement that Sayyaf would fund the in-country costs of training in Pakistan/Afghanistan through his wealthy Saudi donors:

According to my understanding, at the time of the discussion we got one agreement: we can continuously send mujahidin over there and the cost will be assumed by Sheikh Sayyaf. So, with Sheikh Sayyaf’s assistance from the Arabs, Ustad Abdullah [Sungkar] was assisted in sending brothers to wage jihad in Afghanistan and to get military training.385

With a deal struck with Sayyaf, the pair went on to Saudi Arabia where they once again fell back on Muhammad Natsir’s international contacts, as they were met off the plane by an Indonesian student and member of DDII who was studying at a Saudi university. Then they quickly established a base in the capital Riyadh, staying as guests at the office of Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami (World Muslim League), of which Natsir was a deputy chair. With the help of a nephew of Sungkar’s, Ali Fauzir, a Saudi Arabian citizen, Sungkar and Ba’asyir met with important ulema and wealthy donors and

384 Anonymous interview with Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, 2004
385 Ibid.
philanthropists. Aside from meetings with leaders of the Rabitat, including the head of its Riyadh branch, Ba’asyir recalls a dinner with Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz, the leading Salafi cleric and future Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia. Bin Baz, says Ba’asyir, sympathised with their plight as political refugees from Indonesia: “He advised us that there’s no need to be upset because what we have experienced was the path (sirat) followed by the Prophet and his disciples.”

Sungkar and Ba’asyir’s first Saudi funding trip was highly successful. All told, they spent three months in Saudi Arabia, enough time to network widely and perform a pilgrimage to Mecca. And above all, recalls Ba’asyir, their fundraising campaign was successful enough that they could afford to send between twenty and thirty men for training with Sayyaf.

Sending Southeast Asian jihadists to the conflict in Afghanistan started as a rather parochial exercise: Darul Islam recruits, mostly, were tasked primarily to train for the distant goal of toppling the Suharto regime. Generally, recruits sent for training in South Asia came from networks inside Indonesia, transited through Sungkar’s base in Malaysia, where they would be briefed, before arriving in Pakistan, where they would be based. From Pakistan they then had access to the military battlefield in neighbouring Afghanistan. In Malaysia, according to Solahudin, “Sungkar usually explained to them that they were being sent to Afghanistan not to fight the Soviet Union but to undergo tadrīb askary (military training) in order that the skills they acquire may be used to wage jihad in Indonesia.” Recruits were given aliases, typically a Muslim patronymic or kunya beginning with “Abu”, meaning “father of”—usually not referring to an actual son but instead chosen to indicate an attribute (eg. Abu Jihad to denote “Father of Jihad”). They were also encouraged to hide their Indonesian nationality by claiming to be Filipino. Crucially, recruits were required to swear an oath in order to cement their loyalty to Darul Islam and Sungkar.

386 Ibid.
387 Ibid.
388 Solahudin, NIII sampai JI, 205.
What would become known as the “first class” of recruits sent to Afghanistan included Zulkarnen (alias Arif Sunarso), who would go on to become Jemaah Islamiyah’s military commander. Others were the future key operatives Achmad Roichan alias Saad, Marzuki (alias Raja Husen), Syawal Yasin, Mohamad Faiq, and Idris (alias Solahudin). Being sent to “Afghanistan” in fact meant flying from Kuala Lumpur to Karachi, Pakistan, and then travelling to Peshawar in the north east of the country, about an hour’s drive from the Afghan border and where Abdullah Azzam’s MAK office was located. In these early years of the Afghan jihad, from Peshawar recruits would make their way to a camp for Afghan refugees at Pabbi, a short trip east from the regional capital, which was also the location of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf’s Ittihad al-Islami training camp. As early as 1985 there was an Islamic State of Indonesia representative in place at Pabbi to receive Indonesian students, one Abu Utbah, apparently a member of Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami, perhaps another example of how Muhammad Natsir brokered Darul Islam’s early transnational expansion.389 Indeed, some even claim that it was largely the Rabitat that provided Sungkar the funding for the foreign training program.390

The close parallels between Southeast Asian jihadists, coming via the Malay peninsula, and foreign fighters from the Arabian peninsula are striking. Hegghammer notes that the foreign fighter recruitment to the jihad in Saudi Arabia began very slowly in the 1980s, with one jihadist history mentioning only some sixteen Saudi fighters who had gone to Afghanistan prior to 1985. Only from 1985, thanks to the recruitment efforts of Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam, did the flow of Saudi jihadists increase.391 Similar to Southeast Asia, these foreign fighters appear to have been influenced by a cosmopolitan geography that made them more likely to participate in a foreign jihad. According to Hegghammer:

One of the few distinguishing features of the early jihadists as a population is their geographical origin. The Hijaz region is strongly overrepresented, especially among pre-1987 recruits. This is most likely because the first movers were Hijazis and because the crucial

389 Notes on interview with Marzuki, Ken Ward, October 2009.
391 Hegghammer, 45.
international Islamist networks were particularly strong in the relatively cosmopolitan Mecca-Medina-Jidda triangle.\textsuperscript{392}

It is a remarkable accident of history that Abdullah Sungkar, the father of salafi jihadism in the Malay world, was forced into exile in 1985 and landed in a rapidly Islamizing Malaysia at precisely the moment when the Afghan jihad began to be vigorously sold to the Muslim world.

Even though most Southeast Asian foreign fighters were Indonesian, Nasir Abas, a Malaysian, has written most persuasively of how he was motivated to join the jihad by the prospect of battlefield glory, even if he knew he might regret the outcome. In his memoirs, he writes:

I had already imagined the atmosphere of fighting alongside the Afghan mujahidin that I was about to experience and also imagined how to hold a firearm and I had begun to feel sad at the possibility that I might not return to Malaysia because of being killed on the battlefield.\textsuperscript{393}

Key al-Qaeda operative, Abu Zubaydah, notes in his 1991 diary entry on joining the “House of Martyrs”, the Services Bureau, what the atmosphere was like among the militants preparing for jihad:

The spiritual atmosphere here is good; youth and elderly have given their souls to Almighty God, they traded off life and everything in it for jihad. Some came to train for a short period and go back just to be prepared, others are here for jihad and until God decides for something to be done.\textsuperscript{394}

When Nasir Abbas arrived in Peshawar, however, he was disappointed to find that he had to study before he could serve. Recruits like Nasir were required to undergo a three-year course. By the time Nasir Abbas was sent on military training, the Ittihad al-Islami training camp had been moved from Pabbi to Sadda, closer to the Afghanistan border. The camp served as a place where Afghan youth were prepared with the skills to

\textsuperscript{392} Hegghammer, 60.
\textsuperscript{393} Abas, Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah, 33.
continue to fight against the Soviet Union, with the consent of the Pakistani government. Trainers, according to Nasir, where typically Afghans who had themselves undergone military training in India, and thus they replicated much of the Indian curriculum. There were six faculties: Infantry, Engineering, Artillery, Logistics, Communications and Cavalry. The Indonesians, however, while not being assigned to any one faculty mainly focused on acquiring infantry skills. More specifically, Nasir records that the Indonesians, who were grouped together for their classes for language reasons, took classes in tactics, map reading, weapons training, and field engineering, the latter including “Mine and Destruction,” which covered explosives production and emplacement.395

According to Nasir, for the first two years the instructors were Afghans who could speak English or Arabic, and their instructions had to be translated by someone who knew those languages. After that, from the 3rd class onwards, Indonesians who had graduated were tasked with training the newer Darul Islam students. Once they were able to institute classes in Bahasa Indonesia, learning was faster because most of the Darul Islam recruits had no English and no Arabic. While it is sometimes observed that veterans who claim to have trained in “Afghanistan” actually spend most of their time in Pakistan, with some of them perhaps having never seen actual combat, Nasir claims that his class had the opportunity to engage in live combat during fieldwork practice in Khowst, a mountainous province near Afghanistan’s border with Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas that saw heavy fighting in the mid-1980s.396

The most important contribution of the South Asian experience to Southeast Asian jihadism was twofold. First, the military training did serve its purpose in increasing the capacity of graduates to deploy violence in the cause of jihad. Most notably, the level of sophistication of improvised explosive devices used by Southeast Asian jihadists post-Afghanistan appears much higher than the pre-Afghanistan period, when, as we saw in the preceding chapters, jihadists struggled with poor skills and technology to deploy even primitive pipe bombs. The second major contribution is that it connected Southeast Asian jihadists with the much broader network of what can be thought of as a

395 Abas, Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah, 51-52.
396 Ibid., 54-55.
loose international community of militant Islamists. This community included some strong interpersonal relationships between Southeast Asians and jihadists from elsewhere in the world. It facilitated the diffusion of militant pan-Islamist ideology to what were hitherto mostly locally oriented Malaysians, Indonesians and Singaporeans. Furthermore, this was part of a process which saw local militants from other parts of the world develop a global consciousness. The fact that these relationships were created face-to-face, and tempered in the fire of battle and hardship meant they were robust enough to enable collaboration years in the future. The Afghanistan jihad was the crucible from which the global jihadist network, epitomised by al-Qaeda, would emerge. As bin Laden deputy Ayman Al-Zawahiri described it in his memoirs, the Afghan jihad did not just prepare the mujahidin for “battle against the superpower that now has sole dominance over the globe, namely, the United States,” but

It also gave young Muslim mujahideen—Arabs, Pakistanis, Turks, and Muslims from Central and East Asia—a great opportunity to get acquainted with each other on the land of Afghan jihad through their comradeship-at-arms against the enemies of Islam.  

But not all militants were equally “global.” The Afghanistan jihad created a global community of militant Islamists who were diverse in their goals, just they were dispersed in terms of geography—what Vahid Brown calls the “Peshawar Diaspora”, after the Pakistani border city in which the mujahidin were based. They were attracted to the jihad for different reasons. Some were revolutionaries in their home countries who had been inspired by the 1984 fatwa by Abdullah Azzam that declared it the individual duty of Muslims everywhere to support the jihad against the Soviet Union. Some were what Thomas Hegghammer has called “classical jihadists” who were not opposed to their home-country governments, and in the case of Saudi Arabians and many others, they were in fact supported by their governments for strategic reasons.

Still others, like the Southeast Asians of this study, were supporters of the Afghan jihad, and may have flattered themselves with thoughts of their sacrifice, but they were in fact preoccupied on military training for the purpose of jihad back home. As Nasir Abbas makes clear in his autobiography, despite students sometimes getting to fight in

397 Laura Mansfield, trans., His Own Words: Translation and Analysis of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri (TLG Publications, 2006), 38.
Afghanistan as a holiday excursion, seeing combat was not the purpose of the going to Afghanistan. Even on holiday sojourns, participation in fighting against the Soviets was highly restricted:

Typically Indonesians who were under Ittihad-e-Islam were not permitted to take part in combat on the front lines (in the infantry). As such they were placed at the back, with the artillery forces. This was because there was an order from the leader of Ittihad-e-Islam, Ustadz Abdur Robbir Rasul Sayyaf, that barred them from the infantry…. Because Indonesians who departed Indonesia already knew their travel to Afghanistan was for training.398

Even though Southeast Asian jihadists prioritised local rather than global jihad, being part of the Peshawar diaspora forged a collective consciousness of what Thomas Hegghammer has usefully categorized as “militant pan-Islamism.” In the Afghanistan jihad, for the first time Indonesians were thrown together with Filipinos from the Moro National Liberation Front, and with Arabs from Saudi Arabia, Libya, Egypt, not to mention Afghans and Pakistanis. Furthermore, militant pan-Islamism is able to draw support from the mainstream Islamic doctrine of all Muslims being members a supranational community, the umma. Thus what emerged in Peshawar was a militant or violent form of pan-Islamist identity, with as its central notion that, as Hegghammer has it, its proponents would “defend the entire Muslim nation and its territories from non-Muslim aggression.” Abdullah Azzam was the central author of the doctrine, which drew legitimacy from its similarity to traditional notions of jihad in Islam, which emphasise jihad for the defense of Muslim territories. Azzam amended this doctrine so that the defense of Muslims territories was the individual responsibility, fardu ‘ayn, of all Muslims everywhere. According to Hegghammer,

Azam argued that non-Muslim infringement of Muslim territory demanded the immediate military involvement of all able Muslim men in defence of the said territory, wherever its location.399

398 Abas, Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah, 58.
Hegghammer describes militant pan-Islamism as a kind of “macro-nationalism,” which, like other nationalisms, creates a sense of shared identity and consciousness and thus can serve as a powerful mobilizing force. As Hegghammer elaborates:

It is indeed possible to view pan-Islamism as a macro-nationalism centred on the imagined community of the umma, which is defined by religion and to some extent by language (Arabic having a special status in Islam). Although the Muslim nation is by definition aterritorial – the umma is wherever Muslims are – pan-Islamists have a clear sense of what constitutes Muslim territory, namely all lands once ruled by Muslims, from Andalucia in the West to Indonesia in the East.\textsuperscript{400}

In 1984 Abdullah Azzam set the basis for militant pan-Islamism with a declaration, in his book published that year, \textit{The Defence of Muslim Lands}. As Hegghammer notes, the fatwa was a deviation from the mainstream interpretation of jihad in that it argued that it was an individual duty of all Muslims to defend Islam in all territorial battles, and was thus controversial, but over time, and with the successes in the war against the Soviets, the doctrine began to gain currency in the Arabic speaking countries.\textsuperscript{401}

In Southeast Asia and among Darul Islam members, however, Azzam’s 1984 fatwa, coming before Southeast Asians were networked with the Peshawar diaspora, hardly rates a mention. But the ideology of militant pan-Islamism is significant because it paved the way for a more radical variant of pan-Islamism to emerge in the 1990s: global jihadism, developed by Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden’s 1998 fatwa to target the far enemy, as we consider in more detail later, was diffused through the Peshawar diaspora, including to DI and JI members, who debated the decree vigorously. How a minority of those members would act on global jihadist ideology, taking advantage of the Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage they were a part of, would change the face of regional security in the 2000s.

Furthermore, if it was only a minority of Southeast Asian jihadists who would sign up to global jihad (just as it was a minority of the jihadist community in other parts of the world) this minority made up for lack of numbers with ideological fervour. It was in the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[400] Ibid., 8.
\item[401] Ibid., 41–42.
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Peshawar diaspora that some Southeast Asians first met central global jihadi figures like Osama bin Laden and Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, creating the strong social ties that would bind jihadists from different localities to the same extreme ideology. Some of them, most notably 2002 Bali bomber Ali Ghufron (alias Mukhlas), would speak glowingly of their association with bin Laden, who was particularly admired for his willingness to suffer on the front lines of the jihad, despite being from a wealthy and elite family in Saudi Arabia. Of meeting bin Laden in Afghanistan Mukhlas writes, “At that moment I had the conviction that Allah had blessed my life….When I see him it is as if I have been introduced to one of the companions of the Prophet….”

In 1987, a twenty-two day battle against the Soviets for control of the town of Jaji, a key entry point for mujahidin travelling from Pakistan to Afghanistan, was a turning point in the jihadis’ favour and a crucible for relationships between leading figures of the jihad and certain Indonesians who would go on to become jihadi leaders back home. Ahmad Roichan (alias Saad), future JI defacto leader Thoriqudin (alias Abu Rusydan) and Mukhlas are all said to have taken part in the battle, alongside future 9/11 architects Osama bin Laden and Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, a young Ibnul Khattab, future leader of global jihadists in the Caucasuses and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf himself.

Mukhlas recalled the battle with wide-eyed excitement. As quoted by the ICG in 2003, he said,

In 1987 I met Sheikh Osama bin Laden in Joji, Afghanistan, when it was being attacked by Russia; the snow was two metres high….When the mujahadin went on attack, I went with them, and it was Osama bin Laden who… led the mujahedin.

Mukhlas’s enjoyment of jihad suggests the world of fantasy and fetish. Attempting to explain it to a BBC interviewer, he said, “Perhaps it's the sort of pleasure that can’t be understood by those who’ve never experienced it. I’ve had a wife, I’ve had that first

402 Solahudin, NII sampai JI, 209.
403 Ibid., 208.
night and the like, but it’s not as pleasurable as war. War is very pleasurable.\textsuperscript{405}

Although it is probably the case that there were different styles of thinking about waging jihad in Afghanistan, it is not uncommon, as Solahudin shows, to find Darul Islam members who, although expressly sent to acquire skills for jihad back home, were dying for a chance to become martyrs in a major jihad. In an interview with Solahudin, one Indonesian Afghanistan alumnus seconded Mukhlas’s use of the word “enjoyment”:

It’s true what Mukhlas says about the enjoyment of the battlefield being difficult to express in words. I cried tears of sadness when I wasn’t chosen to be sent into battle. Aside from that, on the battlefield the distance between the gates of heaven and ourself is truly close. And the only way we can enter heaven is by syahadah [bearing witness, i.e., dying as a martyr]. Once I was very envious when one of my friends from Ngruki called Jamaludin was martyred after hitting a mine. I would always pray for it to be my turn to be martyred.\textsuperscript{406}

Although the battle of Jaji was only one small defeat for the Russians in their slow retreat from Afghanistan, for the foreign mujahidin it did much to establish their reputation for courage, even though the battle was coordinated more by Sayyaf, who was the Afghan warlord who dominated that area, than bin Laden. Jaji, or the battle of the Lion’s Den, the Maasada, as bin Laden had named his base there (drawing on his nickname, the Lion) also served as the basis for much of the self-serving myth of the foreign mujahidin, or Arab Afghans as they came to be known, as having defeated the Soviet Empire through the will of God. In his history of al-Qaeda and 9/11, Lawrence Wright describes the impact of the victory at Jaji thus:

In the heightened religious atmosphere among the men following bin Laden, however, there was a dizzying sense that they were living in a supernatural world, in which reality knelt before faith. For them, the encounter at the Lion's Den became the foundation of the myth that they defeated the superpower. Within a few years the entire Soviet empire fell to pieces—dead of the wound the Muslims inflicted in Afghanistan, the jihadis believed. By then they had created the vanguard that was to carry the battle forward. Al-Qaeda was conceived in the marriage of these assumptions: Faith is stronger than weapons or nations, and the ticket to enter the sacred zone where such miracles occur is the willingness to die.\textsuperscript{407}

\textsuperscript{405} BBC Interview part 1, 2003, 13.

\textsuperscript{406} Solahudin, \textit{NII sampai JI}, 55.

\textsuperscript{407} Lawrence Wright, \textit{The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda’s Road to 9/11} (London: Penguin, 2006), 119-120.
In 1990, with the end of the jihad against the Soviets the previous year, Darul Islam, with the help of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, was able to establish its own training camp inside Afghanistan at Torkham, on the Khyber Pass, the main supply route between Pakistan and Afghanistan. By 1992 Sayyaf had relocated his camp to Kabul, but Afghanistan was slipping into civil war and an increasingly inhospitable place for foreign jihadi training. This period, however, also saw Darul Islam expand its networking with jihadists from other parts of the world. Darul Islam brothers were sent on short courses to an Egyptian-run camp in northern Khost, courtesy of an agreement with the leaders of the camp, who were from the Egyptian militant group Gama’a Islamiyya. Nasir Abas and a small number of senior Darul Islam figures even appear to have in turn served as instructors at the camp, training a group of Kashmiri militants.

The exposure to local Egyptian jihadists would prove influential in the development of Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia. According to Nasir Abas, Darul Islam, on meeting its Egyptian counterparts, saw itself as sharing Gama’a Islamiyya’s plight in being oppressed at home by a tyrannical secular ruler. Moreover, the central Gama’a Islamiyya text, *Mithaq al-Amal al-Islami* (*The Manifesto of Islamic Activism*) appears to have provided a guide when Jemaah Islamiyah came to re-orienting its own ideology away from its Darul Islam past, to focus not on an Islamic state as the organising principle of the movement but on the establishment of an exclusive congregation or *jema’ah*.

Thus it is not a coincidence that only three years after sharing training facilities with Egyptians from Gama’a Islamiyya, that the new organization that Abdullah Sungkar founded used that same name, only to become known by a slightly different transliteration of the Arabic. Gama’a Islamiyya was led by the “Blind Sheikh” Oman Abdurrahman who would be imprisoned in the US for his role in the first World Trade

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408 Solahudin, *NII sampai JI*, 211.
410 Interview with Nasir Abas, May 10, 2008.
411 For a recent Indonesian print of the text, see See Dr. Najih Ibrahim et al., *Mitsaq Amal Islami* (Solo: Al-Alaq, 2005), 196–203.
Center attack in 1993. But the militant group, just like Sungkar and his JI, was in fact primarily focused on overthrowing their *kafir* local rulers, in order to establish an Islamic caliphate. Similarly, Gama’a Islamiyya rejected nationalism, which it associated with the secularism of the post-colonial nation state championed by the likes of former Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser. We can conclude, therefore, that direct influence from Egyptian jihadists furthered the process of deterritorialising Indonesian jihadism away from its Darul Islam past and towards its transnational Jemaah Islamiyah future. Militant pan-Islamism, as an ideology that orients its proponents to a transnational scale and territorial flexibility, was the perfect ideational fit with the emerging Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage.

The end of the Afghan jihad left foreign fighters at an ideological crossroads. All of them had become more international thinkers and actors by virtue of the war. But they did not all share the same priorities for future jihad. Broadly speaking, the jihadist diaspora was split according to three categories. First, there were the Gulf Arabs who had been mobilized for Azzam’s classical jihad in defense of Muslim lands and who had been supported by states such as Saudi Arabia. These jihadists were naturally attracted to subsequent classical jihads such as took place in Bosnia and Chechnya in the 1990s. Second, there were the socio-revolutionary groups such as Gama’a Islamiyya who sought to return to their homelands to overthrow their local regimes, in GI’s case Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak. Third, there were those who had had reached Peshawar as a member of one camp or another, but post-war began to drift towards global jihadism and to see the US as the primary enemy, under the ideological entrepreneurship of Osama bin Laden. Some of these global jihadists were Southeast Asians; others were from elsewhere but would come to know the region well.

**Conclusion**

The decision to choose Malaysia as the “land of exile” (*bumi hijrah*) from which, in emulation of the prophet, Sungkar would return victorious, was a momentous one. At that historical juncture, a rapidly Islamizing and modernizing Malaysia was uniquely placed in the region to open the movement to a new world beyond the realm of Indonesian repression. The movement became transnational in its membership and operations, and increasingly pan-Islamist in its outlook. This pan-Islamism was fueled by the experience of the Afghan jihad, the historic crucible of militant pan-Islamism,
which coincided neatly with the exile of Sungkar and his circle in 1985. Fatefully, international contacts made during this period among the Peshawar diaspora in Pakistan would later bring global jihadist ideology to the region.

But before the rise of global jihad, the Malacca hinterland in Malaysia emerged as a base from which Southeast Asian jihadists could assemble contacts, locations and materials across the region, a process that would culminate in the region’s first transnational jihadist group, Jemaah Islamiyah. It is difficult to imagine the emergence of a Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage if the movement’s most charismatic and dynamic leaders had been marooned in Arabia.
For millennia the island world of Southeast Asia has been seen by outsiders as remote and hidden. Fragments at the edge of Eurasia—the largest landmass on a watery planet—the region lies in the shadow of the great civilizations of India and China. In more recent times it has been acknowledged by archaeologists and historians as a global hub of diverse cultures. Thus the historic maritime silk route, linking China to India, the Middle East and Europe is now recognised as just as important as its more famous terrestrial counterpart. Maritime Southeast Asia, in other words, is not just a peripheral zone of fragmentation, it is also a unique zone of assemblage.

For the global jihadist on the run, being remote but globally connected is a virtue. It is for this reason that a space that was geopolitically peripheral became central to the rise of global jihadism. The architects of global jihad would become familiar with Southeast Asia’s airports and jungles, its cosmopolitan cities and its isolated camps. In the 1990s these foreign jihadists would discover that their Filipino, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Singaporean brothers could help them to operate across the region with ease. Invisible to most people, a regional jihadist assemblage was at their disposal. The only question was what, exactly, to do with it.

**Malacca hinterland**

Jemaah Islamiyah, Southeast Asia’s first transnational terrorist group, was established in a highly networked yet largely rural area that I have called the Malacca hinterland. This hinterland is an area at the narrow southern tip of the Malay peninsula, and mostly falls under the administration of the Malaysian states of Negeri Sembilan and Johor. It lies beyond the historic port town of Malacca, famous as the capital of a great Sultanate of 1400–1511 CE which was a cosmopolitan entrepot at the centre of a regional trading network, subsequently conquered by the Portuguese. It is a space of contrasts. It is both inland and close to the sea. It is both rural village surrounded by plantations and highway between two ambitious regional capitals, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. It is both quiet and conservative and connected and outward-looking. Strategically, as the Imperial Japanese Army knew in World War Two, it is the land bridge that connects
mainland and island Southeast Asia. Today, Jemaah Islamiyah members, most of whom are Indonesian, might forget that this is where their organisation emerged and grew for fourteen formative years. But, in contrast to Darul Islam, its agrarian and backward-looking parent, JI bears the marks of an organisation that was formed in this historic sub-region of international hubs that emerged, as Srivijaya had before it, to capture the flow of trade through the Strait of Malacca.

It is easy to overlook JI’s Malacca hinterland origins because, as an underground organisation, it never had a central “office”. Consonant with the deep geopolitical structure of the region, JI grew as a distributed network, with its leaders, camps and affiliated schools scattered over maritime Southeast Asia. Although JI was a network without a geographical centre it was still shaped by the places in which it was clustered, like the hinterland, where its leadership was based. Eventually, JI would form a Central Command Council (Majelis Qiyadah Markaziyyah), composed of officeholders appointed by the leader, or Amir. As Nasir Abas concludes, “There is no fixed place as an administrative office for the Central Command Council, so wherever the Leader (Amir Jamaah) is located is the area where the Council can meet, if needed.”

Even in the Malacca hinterland JI’s presence emerged across various sites. After branching out from their initial host, Hashim Ghani at Kuala Pilah, Abdullah Sungkar moved to live in a small town not far away, Simpang Durian, and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir likewise moved to the neighbouring town of Serting Ulu. Both towns, still within the state of Negeri Sembilan, were in close proximity to Kuala Pilah and so allowed the two leaders to continue their practice of attending Friday prayers with Hashim Ghani at his Ittiba Sunnah school.

Meanwhile, Sungkar and another senior figure who had joined Sungkar when he fled, Abu Jibril (alias Fihiruddin), had succeeded in obtaining a Malaysian permit to preach, known as a Tauliyah. Both became known as itinerant preachers in the hinterland. They gave sermons at mosques across the countryside and secretly recruited Malaysian followers. Abu Jibil, who lived in Banting, closer to Kuala Lumpur, also had access to urban congregations. According to his close usroh movement friend Irfan Awwas, Jibril was often invited to teach a Qur’an study group at

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the Indonesian embassy and to teach at the houses of upper-class women in Kuala Lumpur. He even became a staff teacher for the congregation at the Malaysian Ministry of Finance at a time when Anwar Ibrahim was Finance Minister.\footnote{Irfan Suryahardy Awwas, *Dakwah & Jihad Abubakar Ba’asyir* (Jogjakarta: Widah Press, 2003), 40.}

Until 1991 Sungkar’s young acolytes—local Malaysians and those Indonesians who came to him from across the Malacca Strait—had only the option of attending religious instruction at Ittiba Sunnah. From that year, however, they could join Luqmanul Hakim, a new boarding school in the town of Ulu Tiram, Johor, a brief drive across the causeway from Singapore. Luqmanul Hakim was the result of a collaboration between Sungkar and Abdul Latif Haron Embong, a former student of Hashim Ghani and now a salafi preacher with his own small congregation in Ulu Tiram. Due to his strategic location at the southern tip of peninsula Malaysia, Latif’s sermons attracted students from nearby Singapore.\footnote{On Ustadz Latif, see Wan Abdul Hamid bin Wan Mahmud, “Jaringan Jemaah Islamiyah di Malaysia dan Keselamatan Serantau” (thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2006), 18.} Latif and one of his followers, Jaafar Anwarul, who was a local businessman, drove the project, after being recruited into one of Sungkar’s special study circles (*pengajian khusus*). Anwarul donated a plot of land he owned in Ulu Tiram for the school. He would later tell Malaysian television, presumably under the close watch of the police, what had motivated him:

> When I saw that there were many children around the area, I thought they were illiterate in religion and a number of them were school dropouts. Probably they did not know how to read the Quran. I also thought that probably the children did not have a chance to go to a government school. So I was very happy that a madrasah could be built, where I could get the children together and enrich their knowledge and at the same time I could perform a good deed.\footnote{“Jemaah Islamiyah—One Exposure, One Confession,” TV3 (Malaysia), broadcast April 2, 2004.}

The reality, however, was much more interesting. Luqmanul Hakim, more than any other site in the emerging jihadist assemblage, would come to reflect the way that the political geography of Malaysia and the Malacca hinterland had transnationalised and modernised Sungkar’s movement. Although Ngruki, the school Sungkar founded in Java, is more famous today, it was Luqmanul Hakim that assembled teachers and recruits from a religious education background in Indonesia with Malaysian and Singaporean
recruits, often from a technical or applied science background. Luqmanul Hakim became the main transit point for Southeast Asian jihadists from Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia travelling to the jihad in Afghanistan. The result was a jihadist culture that was both more radical, more cosmopolitan, and ultimately more dangerous. Many of these recruits would form the core of the fighters prepared to take up global jihad against the West in Southeast Asia. They included the school principal himself, future 2002 Bali Bombing mastermind, Mukhlas (alias Ali Gufron), and a group of students from the nearby Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, which included the future bombers Noordin Top and Azhari Husein.

According to Ba’asyir, the Malaysians who initiated Luqmanul Hakim sought to prioritise two educational agendas. First, to provide Islamic education that was “cleansed of bidah”—that is, free from Islamic rituals that Salafist Muslims consider to be deviant innovations. Second, “to inspire children with a passion for jihad.” Under the leadership of Sungkar and Ba’asyir’s star student from Ngruki, Mukhlas, Luqmanul Hakim was designed not just a school catering for children from kindergarten to high school age, but as the centre of a village, named Kampung Rabbani (Divine Village), to which followers could relocate with their families to live a more pure Islamic lifestyle. According to Mukhlas’s philosophy, an Islamic boarding school can represent a “Miniature Islamic Government” (Miniatur Pemerintahan Islam), if it is well-managed. Under Mukhlas, this meant a regime even more puritanical than that of his alma mater, Ngruki, which he criticised for its tolerance of mixed-gender classrooms, singing, and other worldly sins. At Luqmanul Hakim all music and television was prohibited. For women, a veil covering the face (niqab) was obligatory. Segregation of the sexes was strictly enforced. “The desire,” writes Mukhlas, “was to make our village our heaven.”

There is no record in Malaysia before 2000 of Sungkar or any of his Darul Islam followers running afoul of the law enforcement authorities, as they had in Indonesia. In an Islamising Malaysia, comfortable with the jihad in Afghanistan, there was a much more permissive environment. Such radical puritanism and insularity at Kampung

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418 Mukhlas, autobiography typescript, ca. 2003, 1, 4.
Rabbani, however, does appear to have irritated the local Islamic authorities, just as Ittiba Us Sunnah had irritated the Islamic authorities in Negeri Sembilan. In January 1993 the national newspaper, *Utusan Malaysia*, reported that a man in his forties, probably a reference to Abdul Latif, had been arrested by the Johor Islamic authorities in Ulu Tiram for teaching religion without a permit and for using a house as a religious site without permission. Sixteen of his followers were also arrested. The article notes that the same man had been arrested for the same reason in 1991. But aside from the occasional slap over the wrist for breaches regarding the administration of Islamic affairs, it appears that the growth of a local jihadist community did not concern the Malaysian government.

**Jemaah Islamiyah**

The combined changes in the jihadist movement brought about by Sungkar’s introduction of Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist ideas and the shift from a national to a transnational scale had their culmination in the establishment of Jemaah Islamiyah in 1993. By this time, Sungkar could be said to have formed a distinct faction within Darul Islam that had travelled a long way from the broader movement’s traditional and revolutionary nationalist jihadism. In many ways, Sungkar had been an awkward recruit to Darul Islam. His increasingly puritanical Salafism put him at odds with Darul Islam’s tradition of Javanese mysticism and millenarianism. His critique of nationalism was in tension with Darul Islam’s own nationalist beginnings. His principled and sophisticated opposition to the Suharto regime was in striking contrast to the compromise and co-optation that characterised the Darul Islam leaders who came before him. Indeed, Sungkar’s political style appears to owe much more to the mentor he idolised, former prime minister Muhammad Natsir, than to Darul Islam’s Kartosoewirjo.

We might even question how committed Sungkar was to Darul Islam in the first place, other than as a vehicle for his own ambitions. One of his former students, Muhammad Nursalim, has gone so far as to claim that Sungkar created Jemaah Islamiyah in the 1970s prior to his joining Darul Islam. In his master’s thesis based on interviews with Sungkar associates in and around Ngruki, Nursalim writes, “In the 1970s Abdullah Sungkar felt the need to form a jama’ah [congregation or community] as an

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organization for the Islamic struggle.” He discussed the issue with several like-minded preachers in Solo. One of these preachers then formed a *jama’ah*, and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir was in favour of joining it, but “at the advice of Abdullah Sungkar and considering the credibility of the leader, the plan was aborted.” Later, “considering the importance of a *jama’ah* for *dakwah*, Abdullah Sungkar established a Jama’ah. This new organization was called Jama’ah Islamiyah.” Nursalim continues:

> The problem arose of what would serve as the parent organization for this newly established *jama’ah*. Because, if only a *jama’ah* is formed, and later it is encroached on by a competing *jama’ah*, surely an efficacious movement, which is so yearned for, will not come to pass. Because of this and various considerations, Jama’ah Islamiyah led by Abdullah Sungkar united with Jama’ah NII [Negara Islam Indonesia].

A variation on this account is given by Ba’asyir, who talks of an aborted attempt to start their own group in Solo, prior to 1976, when they joined Darul Islam. According to Ba’asyir, several dissident preachers in Solo were contacted about forming a new organization, but none were prepared to subject themselves to the risk of government persecution. There is no mention, however, of any kind of “merger”.

A look at early court documents from the period covering the trials of Sungkar, Ba’asyir and their associates does reveal that “Jemaah Islamiyah” was a name that was associated with the Ngruki pair, and at trial this name was sometimes used interchangeably with “Komando Jihad” and “Negara Islam Indonesia”. It is possible that Sungkar, who was highly attuned to political developments in the Muslim world, adopted the name after seeing its use by the Egyptian university student movement of the 1970s that would cohere into the notorious militant organisation of the 1980s and 90s. Suffice it to say, even prior to his encounter with Darul Islam, Sungkar was a radical and entrepreneurial leader in the making.

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422 See, for example, Zubaidi bin Badri, Keputusan [Decision] in case Pidana No. 4/1982/ Pid.B/ PN.Kds., Pengadilan Negeri Kudus.

The date of the establishment of the group formally known as Al-Jamaah Al-Islamiyah is typically given as January 1, 1993. The break with Darul Islam, known in jihadist circles as the *infisol* (Arabic for “separation”), is usually explained in one of two ways, both centring on a breakdown in the relationship between Abdullah Sungkar, by then the most powerful leader in the movement, and Ajengan Masduki, the titular head of the Islamic State of Indonesia. Generally, Sungkar’s supporters claim that Sungkar broke with Masduki over the latter’s mystical tendencies, which jarred with Sungkar’s Salafism. Masduki supporters, on the other hand, reject the charge of mysticism and claim that the dispute centred on allegations that Sungkar had mishandled Darul Islam money. Although the issues of mysticism and money do appear to provide the backdrop to the *infisol*, closer inspection reveals that the primary cause of the split was a different approach to the issue of territory.

From its outset, JI transcended Darul Islam’s obsession with the fixed and bounded territory of the Indonesian state by creating commands to cover areas beyond Indonesia and at a transnational scale. Initially, this meant two areas of coverage: Mantiqi I, led by Hambali, covering Malaysia and Singapore and Mantiqi II, led by Abdullah Anshori, covering Indonesia. Although more Mantiqis would be added later, these two would form the core of the organisation. That the first Mantiqi covered not the fatherland of Indonesia but the new areas of Malaysia and Singapore reflected the shift of the centre of gravity of the movement from inland Java to the cosmopolitan Malacca hinterland. (Hambali’s Mantiqi I post placed him in a powerful strategic position to take the movement in a global jihadist direction, as we shall see later.) In further contrast to Darul Islam, the territoriality of Jemaah Islamiyah was not fixed and bounded, but relational, regional and open to expansion through recruitment of new members. As Nasir Abas is careful to emphasise, “Mantiqi meant area [wilayah], that is to say, the area of Islamic proselytization of Al-Jamaah Al-Islamiyah, it did not mean an area of control.”

Thus JI embodied the process of rescaling and reterritorialization of the movement that had begun with Abdullah Sungkar’s emigration to Malaysia.

Although JI’s stated long-term objective was to transform Indonesia into an Islamic state, and in the even longer-term, to form a larger caliphate, in the here-and-now it

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sought to break out of Darul Islam’s “territorial trap” and to operate in a way that was in tune with the facts on the ground, and the facts of the ground: that is, an area of operations, both archipelagic and transnational, that lent itself not to defending bounded territory but to establishing fluid and flexible networks of recruits across an assemblage of fragmented spaces. As Ash Amin has described it for organisations in an age of globalisation, establishing “nodal power” is more important than “territorial power.” That is to say, “Exercising nodal power and aligning networks at large in one’s own interest, rather than […] exercising territorial power (unless one has access to the core sources such as control over the means of coercion and enrolment, as do some powerful regions and states).”\(^{425}\)

Primary sources from the time of the group’s founding are scarce, but Abdullah Sungkar can be heard talking about the break with Darul Islam in a low-fidelity, undated audio recording made sometime in the mid- to late 1990s.\(^{426}\) Sungkar says that his main difference with the elders of Darul Islam was over the issue of the organisation’s “commandment system” (*stelsel komandemen*, in the Dutch terminology used by the movement) and the existence of the State—a reference to Darul Islam’s Islamic State of Indonesia. Since Sungkar’s exile in Malaysia the Darul Islam leadership in Indonesia, including Ajengan Masduki, had continued to act as if Kartosoewirjo’s Islamic State still existed, with its territorially based system of commanders and other office-bearers designed to mirror the Indonesian republic, even as the movement could barely keep itself out of jail. But Darul Islam’s pretentions to territorial control were unrealistic. In Sungkar’s words:

> The problem is, without de facto control, the commandment system cannot be enforced…. Essentially, the commandment system can only be implemented within a state, and that state must have authority.\(^{427}\)


\(^{427}\) Ibid.
The solution, he argues, is to “return to the jemaah.” That is, he explains, to build a congregation based in the community at large, just like the Prophet himself who began his proselytizing with a jemaah in Mecca.

The infisol as a reaction against Darul Islam’s out-of-date obsession with territory is expanded on by Ba’asyir, who explains that the separation was triggered by “requests that didn’t make any sense” on the part of Masduki. For example, Masduki commanded Sungkar to place Islamic State of Indonesia ambassadors in foreign countries, such as Pakistan, even though this would be difficult to achieve and, in Sungkar’s view, expose the group’s foreign activities to the authorities. Such requests, in Ba’asyir’s recollection, served as the impetus to discard Darul Islam’s territorial baggage altogether:

Ustad Abdullah Sungkar began to think, Let’s not have jemaah DI acting like NII at a time when it had territory [wilayah], because DI has no territory…. Now that it has no territory anymore, Ustad was of the opinion that NII should return to the jemaah, while keeping the aim of establishing a Daulah Islamiyah [Islamic state] with the method [manhaj] of dawah-wal-jihad [proselytization and jihad], but not in the form of the NII. 428

The proximate cause of the separation, then, was the failure of a sclerotic Darul Islam leadership to adapt to the reality of Indonesia under the consolidated military dictatorship of Suharto. Tellingly, from the separation onwards, Sungkar and Ba’asyir used the Arabic term Daulah Islamiyah to label their vision of an Islamic state so as to not confuse it with Darul Islam’s now obsolete Negara Islam Indonesia. They would continue to respect Kartosoewirjo’s legacy, but they would no longer be bound by it.

Abdurrahman Ayub, a former senior JI leader in Australia who was present at post infisol meetings in Malaysia in 1993 recalls how the separation led to rancorous debates among the jemaah, including in the distant outposts of the network, such as Tawao and Sandakan in East Malaysia. At one meeting in Serting Ulu, Sungkar, Ba’asyir, Abu Jibril had a heated debate with representatives of Ajengan Masduki, Abu Haris (alias Abdul Hak) and Muhyiddin. According to Abdurrahman, Sungkar offended Muhyiddin by stating that NII does not exist. Muhyiddin responded with words to the effect of,

“I’m very offended, it’s not so long ago that I can recall the proclamation [of the Islamic State]. I’m very offended that someone would say NII doesn’t exist.” At this point, Abdurrahman recalls that he interjected to ask Muhyiddin which he thought was larger, the Islamic State of Indonesia or the Ottoman Caliphate. Muhyiddin replied that the Caliphate was larger. “And you would concede that the Caliphate fell in 1924?” he asked. Muhyiddin agreed. “So then why can’t you accept that the NII has also fallen?” he said.

The Jemaah Islamiyah that Sungkar created replaced Darul Islam’s mystical and nationalist traditions with an explicitly Salafist method and obsession with preparations for jihad, defined in narrow military terms. If Sungkar had not been directly influenced by the emergence of salafi jihadism in the student movement in Egypt in the 1970s, in the 1990s he clearly modelled JI on its Egyptian namesake, Gama’a Islamiyya, at the time perhaps the largest salafi jihadist organization anywhere in the world. It is not known how much direct contact Sungkar had with senior GI figures in Pakistan, but Abu Bakar Ba’asyir acknowledges that he was directly influenced by Gama’a Islamiyah. The 1989 Gama’a Islamiyyah text Mitsaq Amal Islami, according to Ba’asyir, was adopted as a manual for the new organization such that Jemaah Islamiyah was “the same as, and of the same source as, Gama’a Islamiyya Egypt.” Thus JI was “from the start exactly the same as Gama’a Islamiyya Egypt and a lot was taken from its writings.”

In Mitsaq Amal Islami Sungkar found a more flexible organisational model based on grassroots organising to replace the Darul Islam model, which fixated on maintaining a state apparatus and a claim to bounded territory. A subsection titled “Through the Community” (“Melalui Jama’ah”) lays out the jurisprudential case for the community or congregation as the correct organizing principle of any truly Islamic movement. As it concludes, following the citation of a number of relevant Qur’anic verses and Hadith:

All this is sufficient as a reason and a cause to compel us to adopt the jama’ah as the method of struggle and to choose the jama’ah as the only way to obey Allah and His Messenger.430

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430 Ibrahim et. al., Mitsaq Amal Islami, 203.
Through its writings, GI Egypt furnished Sungkar with an argument, based in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqih), for making the community or congregation (the jamaah) the organisational basis of the movement. This argument supported what had been Sungkar’s inclination all along, that is, to build a movement up from the grassroots through the proselytization of jihad (dawah-wal-jihad) rather than from the top down through Darul Islam. In fact, the common JI line that the organisation was about “returning to the jemaah” had multiple meanings: it could refer to a return to the way of the prophet in Mecca, as Sungkar and Ba’asyir liked to say, but it could also refer to the 1970s when, as we have seen, Sungkar and his followers first began to use the name Jemaah Islamiyah.

Thus the creation of Jemaah Islamiyah proceeded on the basis that Darul Islam could no longer could lay claim to territory (wilaya). Acting head of JI, Abu Rusydan, described the move this way in a 2007 interview with the Indonesian news magazine Gatra:

On 1 January 1993, when we separated from the NII, the most fundamental reason was that we wanted to think concretely. If we start from the “Islamic State of Indonesia,” then the conditions can no longer be met. So we tried to return to al-Jamaah al-Islamiyah, the Muslim community.

[Gatra:] Does that mean abandoning the ideal of an Islamic state?

The ideal of an Islamic State is not gone. What’s gone is the starting point that we still have an “Islamic State.” When we were in the NII, we still followed the Islamic State. By separating from the NII, JI was thinking from square one. Our starting point would now be with the jamaah.431

Although it was accurate of Rusydan to say that the idea of an Islamic state was not gone, the new organization of Jemaah Islamiyah bore the imprint of a Salafist organization that rejected nationalism and the nation-state in principle and placed an emphasis, as had Gama’a Islamiyya, on establishing a caliphate not bound by the secular borders of the territorial nation-state. In 1996 this principle was codified in the General Struggle Guidelines of Jemaah Islamiyah. Authored by the “Central Leadership Council,” this was the founding document of the new organization. The organization’s

431 “Abu Rusydan: Aksi Teror Bukan Tanggung Jawab JI,” Gatra, July 6, 2007,
declared purpose was to establish an Islamic state, using the term *Daulah Islamiyah*, this state was to be “the basis for reestablishing a Caliphate in the way of the Prophet.”

Most JI recruits were Indonesians who continued to be Indonesia-centric in their outlook. This was true even if the notion of an Islamic state as a stage on the path to a caliphate had long been in the background of Darul Islam thinking, just as a caliphate is an ideal polity for many Islamist movements inspired by early Islamic history. Yet the reference to a caliphate in the JI constitution reflected the fact that the leadership was now based in the transnational and cosmopolitan space of the Malacca hinterland. A singular nation-state was no longer a large enough territorial vision to accommodate the movement. Non-Indonesian members, in particular, were more likely to envision a future Islamic polity in transnational, caliphate terms. Interviews with arrested JI members in Singapore revealed that they wished to expand JI’s original vision of an Indonesian Islamic state to encompass an archipelagic caliphate or *Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara*, taking in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, and with time, Singapore and Brunei.\(^{432}\) The concept of a regional caliphate, even if a distant dream, was the logical political conclusion of the emerging regional jihadist assemblage.

It was only in 1997 that JI expanded its Mantiqi system to cover the four areas that taken together would see the group described as a truly regional Southeast Asian organisation. The two new Mantiqis represented a further implicit challenge to the region’s sovereign territorial borders. Mantiqi III, led by Abu Tholut (alias Mustapha) would combine areas of eastern Indonesia, including Sulawesi, with Sabah in eastern Malaysia and Mindanao in the southern Philippines. An emerging Mantiqi IV, led by Abdurrahim Ayub, would cover Australia, as if to demonstrate that *Jemaah Islamiyah* would not be bound by conventional notions of what constitutes “the region.” In seeking to clarify the Mantiqi system, Nasir Abas, who would eventually become the head of Mantiqi III, writes “it did not represent the delimitation of an area that will become an Islamic State,” but served rather “the administration of proselytization and territorial management.”\(^{433}\)


\(^{433}\) Abas, *Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah*, 121.
The formation of Mantiqi III, which centred on the tri-border area of Malaysia, Indonesia and the southern Philippines, indicated the significance of this space in the emerging regional assemblage. In the early 1990s Sungkar tasked a Malaysian, Usman Sani, to recruit a network in the area in the Malaysian state of Sabah. Usman Sani who was from Sabah himself, had come under the influence of Sungkar in Negeri Sembilan. Following Sungkar’s orders, Sani established himself in the Sabah capital, Sandakan, from where he was able to recruit about 60 members to what was then still Darul Islam, although after the infisol this network would later convert to Jemaah Islamiyah. Some of these Sabah members would become prominent wives in the movement, most notably Noralwizah Lee, who became the wife of Hambali and who would go on to acquire weapons training in Afghanistan.

But this was not the first Darul Islam community in Sabah. The network built upon a pre-existing Darul Islam community that had fled to the island of Borneo, of which Sabah is a part, from South Sulawesi in the early 1960s. These Darul Islam members were followers of Kahar Muzakkar, whose rebellion was being crushed by Indonesian republican forces at the time. Some fleeing Darul Islam members from South Sulawesi ended up in Sabah, were they lived in communities that continued to venerate Kahar Muzakkar and the Islamic State of Indonesia. For example, Ummu Husna, a Sabah resident who was recruited by Usman Sani and became the wife of Nasir Abas, traces her family origins to South Sulawesi. “Her father,” according to a report, “was one of the members of the Darul Islam Kahar Muzakkar movement that came from Enrikang, South Sulawesi, in 1962 by boat to the waters off Sandakan.”

Sabah, however, is but one, albeit important, part of the tri-border zone, an area located at the centre of archipelagic Southeast Asia that became a convergence space for jihadists in the 1990s, in defiance of nation-state boundaries—a position it holds to this day. This remote and undergoverned borderland facilitated jihadists from different

434 “Laporan Kerja Lapangan Darul Islam Sabah” (unpublished manuscript, ca. 2007), 3.
435 Ibid., 3n10.
nations, groups and networks to collaborate and engage in multi-scalar operations, making it one of the most strategic components of the regional jihadist assemblage.

Just like the region of the Malacca strait, centuries of history demonstrate the triborder area to be at a strategic location favourable to political assemblage. The area emerged as a regional commercial power under the Sulu Sultanate in the 18th century, in part due to its central geographical position in the Sulu archipelago, a small island chain which is located almost precisely at the centre of what is now the tri-border. “The Sulu archipelago,” writes James Warren, “bridged two worlds [China and India] and lay at the most strategic point for the maritime trade of the nineteenth century.” If you look closely at almost any map of Southeast Asia, you can see that the historical capital of the Sulu Sultanate, the tiny island of Jolo, lies at the centre of the larger archipelago, at a point roughly equidistant from the Eurasian landmass in the north and the continent of Australian in the south. Jolo is also centrally located between the two largest islands of the tri-border area: Borneo, the third largest island in the world, and Mindanao, the second largest island of the Philippines. The Sulu Sultanate formed the central component of an assemblage that incorporated the wider area, a relationship underpinned by centuries of inter-insular trade by local seafaring communities. Warren describes this larger area of economic influence with the Sulu archipelago at its centre as the “Sulu Zone”. “In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,” he argues,

there existed in the zone comprising the Sulu archipelago, the northeast coast of Borneo, the foreland of southern Mindanao, and the western coast of Celebes [Sulawesi] a loosely integrated political system that embraced island and coastal populace, maritime, nomadic fishermen, and slash and burn agriculturalists of the coastal rim and interior foothills.  

Thus, Warren concludes, “The power of the Southeast Asian maritime world represented by Aceh in the seventieth century and Johor in the eighteenth century [both located on the Malacca strait] is continued in the Sulu Sultanate until the eve of the twentieth century.” Although the Sulu Zone has declined in commercial significance, the traditional patterns of trade and commerce, facilitated by local seafarers, has

438 Ibid., xxi.
439 Ibid., 255.
continued regardless of the imposition of the Philippine-Malaysia-Indonesia borders. In recent decades, the routinized practice of what would now be called “border transgression” has combined with under-governance to allow the emergence of a jihadist convergence space. The significance of the zone was not lost on regional jihadists, like JI’s Nasir Abas, who became head of Mantiqi III covering the tri-border. In his autobiography, Abas notes:

The area of Sabah Malaysia, East Kalimantan Indonesia and North Sulawesi function as a crossing route. The traditional crossing route became the main route that we used, because the local people there had mastered so well the illegal route.440

In the 1990s, due to undergoverance and the rise of local militant Islamist groups, Mindanao in the Southern Philippines emerged as an important component in the regional jihadist assemblage. In 1984 the Moro Islamic Liberation Front splintered from the Moro National Liberation Front, and began to champion an Islamic state in Mindanao, taking the conflict in an Islamist and jihadist direction. In 1992 the Abu Sayyaf Group also splintered from the MNLF. Led by Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, who had fought in Afghanistan, embedded within the broader struggle for an ethnic Muslim homeland in Mindanao. Collaboration between Jemaah Islamiyah, MILF and Abu Sayyaf militants in Mindanao was the most important expansion of the regional assemblage since the move from Indonesia to the Malacca hinterland. Contacts with Philippine jihadists appear to have had their origins in the Afghan war, when they met at the Sayyaf training camp at Sadda, and according to Nasir Abas, the Moros allowed the Darul Islam jihadists to say they were Filipino in order to hide their identities.441 First contact in Mindanao itself, however, was pioneered by Darul Islam. In 1991 five militants then under the direction of Ajengan Masduki, went on a sort of study tour to visit the MILF in Mindanao. The five were all Indonesian, and included Hambali (prior to his close association with Abdullah Sungkar) and Akram (one of the few senior militants who would not join Sungkar in JI).442

440 Abas, Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah, 129.
441 Ibid., 141.
442 Ibid., 143.
It was not until after the civil war and the rise of the Taliban in 1992 forced JI to abandon its Torkham training camp that Sungkar, now flying the flag of Jemaah Islamiyah, cultivated the Moro Islamic Liberation Front as a collaborator in jihad and military training (*iʿdad askari*). In 1994 Zulkarnaen, JI’s head of military affairs, ordered five members to go to Mindanao to help train MILF soldiers. Zulkarnaen had formed a close relationship with MILF commander Hasyim Salamat in Pakistan in the 1980s, and the MILF had benefited from JI military training in the Afghan camps.\(^{443}\) Most of the five reached Mindanao by boat, island hopping through the Sulu archipelago. From Sandakan, in Malaysian Borneo, they sailed to the Philippine island of Tawi-Tawi and then on to Zamboanga on the island of Mindanao. From Zamboangao they sailed to Cotabatu, before making their way over land to the MILF base camp, Abu Bakar.

One of the five, Nasir Abas, took charge of the military training, eventually relocating to a nearby piece of jungle just north of the MILF camp, which he cleared with the help of sixty Filipinos with machetes, and named Camp Hudaibiyah. He modelled the camp on the military training academies of the Afghan jihad. Abas, due to his Afghanistan training, was a gifted weapons instructor experienced with a range of weapons, including grenade launchers, mortars, small arms and anti-tank weapons. Camp Hudaibiyah became one of three smaller administrative units within Mantiqi III. According to Nasir Abas, Mantiqi III was directed towards becoming a “Military Support Area” for JI. Abas writes:

> The meaning of a Military Support Area is an area that can be used for an Academy of Military Education and Training and short-term Military Courses, and also as an area that has the potential to become a source of military strength.\(^{444}\)

The southern Philippines within Mantiqi III, Abas observes, would become the primary source of military supplies for JI because

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\(^ {444}\) Abas, *Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah*, 128.
all throughout my experience in that area it was so easy to obtain equipment, ammunition, weapons and explosives with detonators, as long as you have enough money and the agreement of the local seller. Moreover, crossing the border between the two countries, that is, Indonesia and the Philippines, was still relatively safe to do illegally.\textsuperscript{445}

Indeed, shortly after Abas’s arrival in Mindanao he observed the MILF receive a massive shipment of arms on a boat from Vietnam, which had crossed the South China Sea to dock at Cotabatu. The shipment included rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and large .50 calibre guns, which were carried over land to Camp Abu Bakar.\textsuperscript{446}

Although Camp Hudaibiyah was originally established to train the MILF, over time it became JI’s main training facility for its own recruits. Effectively, JI had moved its military training from Afghanistan to the Philippines, to which travel would be more convenient and much less costly. We can see the move as a major step in the slow gathering of a regional assemblage. The students who trained there came from across the archipelago. Largely, they were Filipinos, Indonesians, Malaysians and Singaporeans. By one account, 111 Indonesian militants were trained at Camp Hudaibiyah between 1994 and 2000, before the camp was replaced by another JI camp, Jabal Qubal, after Hudaibiyah and Camp Abu Bakar were overrun by the Philippines military.\textsuperscript{447}

\textbf{Origins of global jihadism in Southeast Asia}

In the end of 1994, two developments in the annals of jihadist history had occurred simultaneously in Southeast Asia. These developments would occur completely independent of each other, but quickly converge and later culminate in the rise of global jihadism and the attacks of September 11. The first was the growth of a regional jihadist assemblage in Southeast Asia. According to assemblage theory, assemblages, formed through recurrent processes at a particular scale, may be more or less coherent and territorialized.\textsuperscript{448} By late 1994 one organization, Jemaah Islamiyah, could now boast a

\textsuperscript{445} Ibid., 130-131.
\textsuperscript{446} Nasir Abas, interview notes, January 2004.
permanent presence in each the three major states of the Malay Archipelago: Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. JI, with its regional network, was central to a process which assembled jihadists across a number of networks and organizations—MILF, Abu Sayyaf, and Darul Islam—into a loose regional formation. The second was the relocation to the Philippines of Ramzi Yousef, the freelance pioneer of global jihad, who chose to base himself in Manila after his bombing of the World Trade Centre in 1993.

Yousef and his uncle, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, were influential members of the Arab Afghan mujahidin community, the transnational assemblage of foreign fighters better described as the Peshawar diaspora. Although they were connected to Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda organization, which had formed in 1988, they were known for their organizational independence. Yousef shared bin Laden’s view that after the fall of the Soviet Union the next target should be the other remaining superpower, the US. But in Yousef’s case, as a Pakistani with Palestinian heritage, his primary grievance was US support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Due to his organizational independence, however, in order to carry out attacks he was reliant on the interpersonal networks he could forge for individual operations. Yousef had become a hero in some jihadist circles for his attempt to blow up the World Trade Centre in 1993, which came close executing its plan of toppling one tower into the other, drawing on the network of mujahidin originally connected by Abdullah Azzam’s Afghan Services Bureau, which stretched to New York.

The day following the World Trade Centre attack, Yousef took a flight out of the United States undetected. But the local operatives who he used in the operation, many of them associated with JI’s Egyptian namesake, Gama’a Islamiyah, were quickly arrested. Soon the FBI was hunting Yousef in his native Pakistan. Pakistan, to make matters worse for Yousef, was now no longer so hospitable to jihadists. In January 1993 the Pakistan government had announced that the mujahidin offices would be closed and there would

be greater scrutiny of foreigners’ visas.451 Afghanistan had descended into civil war. The next great classical jihad to defend Muslim land would emerge in Bosnia, to which many of the mujahidin who did not want to return to their home countries travelled in the 1990s. What Yousef wanted, however, was a safe base from which to continue his violent jihad against the US. Somewhere remote from the manhunt for him in Pakistan and far away from the unrest in the region generally. It is for this reason, among others, that he looked towards Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asia became the region most important to the emergence of global jihadism after Afghanistan-Pakistan thanks to it being both a space that is remote from the rest of the Muslim world and one that, in the 1990s, was rapidly globalizing. Yousef had begun travelling there in the early 1990s, and as early as 1992 had developed a relationship with the Abu Sayyaf Group, travelling to the latter’s camp on the island of Basilan in the Sulu archipelago. According to the Philippines police, it was Yousef who first contacted the ASG via its leader Janjalani, who he knew him from a military training camp in Libya. (They may have also been aware of each other through the Peshawar diaspora.) Their reconnection in the Philippines was brokered by Osama bin Laden’s brother-in-law, Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, who ran the Philippine branch of the Saudi charity, the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO), that is alleged to have been channeling funds to the ASG, funds allegedly originating from Bin Laden.452 Khalifa’s precise involvement as a financier of Yousef, not to mention a range of other individuals and groups, remains a topic of some mystery and intrigue, but was summarized matter-of-factly in a 2005 US diplomatic cable on “Islamic NGOs in the Philippines”:

The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO)—a subsidiary of the Saudi-based and funded Muslim World League (MWL)—was active here in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Operated by Usama Bin Laden’s brother-in-law, Saudi businessman Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, and with links to captured al-Qaeda lieutenant Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the IIRO served as a legal front to conceal the transfer of al-Qaeda funding

and materiel to the Abu Sayyaf Group and possibly other insurgents or terrorists operating in the Philippines.\textsuperscript{453}

Although he had been travelling to the Philippines in the early part of the decade, it was only in late 1994 that Yousef decided to make Southeast Asia his base for global jihad. The information on why Yousef chose the region is limited, but the context he faced is relatively clear. At the time he was being hunted by the US, which had put a $2 million dollar bounty on his head. He was the most wanted terrorist in the world. There were obvious places he might have sought refuge. In 1992 Osama bin Laden had left civil war-torn Afghanistan for the shelter of the rogue Islamist state of Sudan under the regime of the mercurial Hasan al-Turabi. The previous most wanted terrorist in the world, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, known as Carol the Jackal, had also found safe haven in Sudan, although in August 1994 the regime sold him out to Western intelligence and he was bundled off to France for trial. But Sudan was growing increasingly isolated from the international community for its role in harbouring militants, a process that would lead to crippling sanctions being imposed on it in 1996. Meanwhile, the countries of the so-called “Asian miracle” in East and Southeast Asia were heading the opposite direction. They were undergoing the most rapid industrialization and globalization in human history. Southeast Asia was both remote from the troubles of the rest of the Muslim world and growing increasingly globally integrated. It was, perhaps, the least likely place the US authorities would be looking.

Yousef’s decision to move to Southeast Asia was described to FBI interrogators by one of his closest colleagues, Abdul Hakim Murad, who was arrested in the Philippines and jailed in the US alongside Yousef for his role in the World Trade Centre attack. According to the interrogation report:

\begin{quote}
MURAD advised that RAMZI told him that he travelled around Southeast Asia, i.e., Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Philippines, to find a permanent residence because he believed the FBI was actively searching for him in Karachi. Murad said that RAMZI concluded that the Manila area was acceptable because the cost of living is reasonable.\textsuperscript{454}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{454} FBI interrogation of Abdul Hakim Murad, FD-302, 12-13 April, 1995, 17.
In a report the Philippines police made after they arrested Murad, Murad spoke about why Yousef had specifically chosen the Philippines as his base. According to the report:

BASIT [Ramzi Yousef] had travelled in Asia specifically in Singapore, Hongkong and the Philippines looking for a place wherein the standard of living is considerably low. Thus, he had chosen the Philippines to be his base country in Asia because of the low standard of living. Likewise, it is the only country in Asia wherein he contacted and had a formal meeting with fellow Muslim extremists.455

Going by the scarce information available, then, Ramzi Yousef, on the run after the first World Trade Centre attack, chose to relocate to a geographically peripheral part of the world where it would not be expensive to live, and where he would be able to collaborate with locally based jihadists, some of whom he may have been acquainted with from foreign training camps. But whether or not he realized it when he made his move, he would also find himself in a Southeast Asia at the peak of its “miracle” economic growth. Based on the rapid industrialization of the 1970s and 1980s, Ramzi’s arrival in the region coincided with a massive expansion of commercial air travel. Annual air traffic for the Asia Pacific grew above ten percent for ten years from 1985-1995, led by the international sector. The rapid growth was such that by 1996 two of Southeast’s airports, Singapore’s Changi and Bangkok’s Don Muang, ranked in the top ten airports in the world by number of passengers.456 Broadly speaking, the only part of the world with more air travel than East Asia was Western Europe. The air travel boom was remarked on by a US Federal Aviation Administration director based at Singapore’s Changi airport in 1993: “The growth of aviation in this part of the world is incredible. I've been here since 1988 and just by looking out the window, watching the increase in flights, I can tell how fast aviation is moving in this region. It's like an engine heating up.”457 Furthermore, due to unequal agreements signed by Southeast Asian countries with the US carriers in previous decades, the US airliners enjoyed liberal arrangements to operate in the region, in competition with local carriers. The US was in fact driving even greater liberalization, towards an “open skies” policy, an

agenda some countries, such as the Philippines, sought to at least postpone. Thus, US airliners like Northwest Airlines and United Airlines were frequent fliers in the region, which they saw as a major growth area. The dominance of US airliners in Southeast Asia was such that the New York Times commented on the disparity bluntly. “Now, the reasons for the concern of Asian airlines is clear every day at major airports across this continent,” a correspondent wrote. “It is possible for an American traveler to visit every major Asian business center on a single trip without flying on an Asian airline.”

Although Ramzi had access to the ungoverned territory of the Abu Sayyaf in the remote Sulu archipelago, it is notable that he based himself in the region’s most rapidly emerging cosmopolitan megacity, Metropolitan Manila, which by 1990 had a population of over fifteen million people in its extended region.

Assemblage thinking sensitizes us to the significance of, among other things, the global city, because the assemblage is theorized as a coming together of both social and material elements. Thus, one of the significant dimensions of an assemblage may be its technological components. In an assemblage, as Aihwa Ong describes it, “the proliferation of technologies across the world produces systems that mix technology, politics, and actors in diverse configurations that do not follow given scales or political mappings.”

Philippine police documents on the investigation of Yousef’s activities in this period indicate he and his associates’ regular air travel in and out of—and between—the region’s capital city airports. Some of the routes they frequented, like Singapore-Hongkong, were, by the mid-1990s, among the most travelled air routes in the world, with more passengers than London-Paris. It was in this both geopolitically peripheral and rapidly globalizing space that the vision for the attacks of 9/11 was conceived. In his definitive account of the rise of al-Qaeda, Lawrence Wright paints an evocative picture of this period:

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459 Ibid.
462 Ibid., 137.
Yousef flew back to Pakistan, and soon after that, he moved to Manila. There he began concocting extraordinary schemes to blow up a dozen American airliners simultaneously, to assassinate Pope John Paul II and President Bill Clinton, and to crash a private plane into CIA headquarters. It is interesting to note, at this early date, the longing on the part of the Islamists to accomplish complex, highly symbolic attacks that were unlike anything ever achieved by any other terrorist group. Theatre is always a feature of terror, and these were terrorists whose dramatic ambition was unrivaled.  

The scheme to blow up eleven United Airlines airplanes in quick succession over the Pacific before they reached the US came to be known as the Bojinka or Manila Air plot. “Project Bojinka” was the name given to the plot set out in one of the computer files found on a laptop computer at the Josefa apartment. An account by Rafael Garcia, the computer analyst who was asked to access the files and summarize their contents, reveals the extent to which the plot was based on the cell’s reconnaissance of the East and Southeast Asian air transport network:

This was a plot to blow up 11 airlines over the Pacific Ocean, all in a 48-hour period. The planes would have come from Seoul, Hong Kong, Taipei, Tokyo, Bangkok, Singapore, and Manila. Even the airlines and the specific flight numbers had been chosen. There was a document where calculations had been made on how to set the timers on the bomb to be placed on each flight so that they would explode within a set time.

The Bojinka plot was only discovered by the Philippine authorities by accident. The lead police investigator, Senior Superintendent Rodolfo Mendoza, described the investigation, which was triggered by “a simple accident at Room 603 of the Dona Josefa Apartment along Quirino Avenene, Malate, Manila”:

Some residents complained of an “explosion” and the smell of acrid fumes coming from Room 603. The Fire Department and the police were called in by the apartment security to check on the origin of the smoke. When the firemen arrived, they checked the room which was registered to one Javy Asweta HADAD and discovered that there was really no fire but that the fumes came from a chemical reaction/explosion. [The Philippine authorities] conducted a surreptitious entry on the room which resulted in the recovery of a laptop computer and paraphernalia for the manufacture

of improvised explosive devices. A stake-out was conducted … and on 07 January 1995, one of the occupants of the room came back to the room and he was immediately arrested. He was identified as one Abdul Hakim Ali Hasmid MURAD @ ABDUL MURAD, a Pakistani national around 26 years of age.\textsuperscript{465}

In addition to the Bojinka plot, the Philippines authorities discovered plans to assassinate Pope John Paul II, who was due to visit Manila in January 1995. But the main innovations in attack methodology discovered in the apartment related to airplanes. In this regard, although Ramzi Yousef was the leader of the cell and entrepreneur of violence without many rivals, Senior Superintendent Mendoza’s interrogations of the cell suspects persuaded him that it was Abdul Hakim Murad who had dreamt up the most significant innovations, drawing on his experience as a trained pilot.

Murad and Yousef, both from Pakistanis families, were childhood friends who grew up together in Kuwait. After high school they both left Kuwait, gravitating back to Pakistan but also both seeking training overseas. In 1990 Murad was a student at a flight school in Metro Manila.\textsuperscript{466} In the early 1990s Murad travelled to the US where he trained at flight schools in New York City, Texas and North Carolina, eventually gaining his commercial pilot license.\textsuperscript{467} Murad was in flight training in the US when Yousef carried out the first World Trade Center attack in February 1993. According to Mendoza, while Yousef was the mastermind of the attack, the target had been suggested by Murad. “According to Murad,” Mendoza writes,

Yousef asked him to recommend a good target for bombing in the U.S. in 1993 because he was then studying in the U.S. and Yousef had just undergone a six-months explosives training in Jallalabad, Afghanistan…. Murad recommended the World Trade Center in New York City because it was the commercial center in the U.S. Thus it was the subject of Yousef’s bombing attack in February 1993.\textsuperscript{468}

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\textsuperscript{465} Mendoza, “Philippine Jihad Inc.,” 160.
\textsuperscript{466} Abdul Hakim Murad, Debriefing Report, February 8, 1995.
\textsuperscript{467} Mendoza, “Philippine Jihad Inc.,” 162-163.
\textsuperscript{468} Ibid., 165.
But this was not Murad’s greatest contribution to the development of global jihadism. Murad also had the idea of using a commercial airplane to carry out a suicide attack against the CIA headquarters in Virginia. In the annals of jihadist history, it was Murad and Yousef’s time together in the apartment they shared in Manila, where they assembled the concepts, exploits and weapons of global jihad against the West, where the idea of using planes as missiles was first conceived. As summarized by Mendoza from the original debriefing report of Murad on January 20, 1995:

The idea of attacking the CIA headquarters as conceptualized by Murad was discussed by them in the Philippines in December 1994. They discussed the viability of suicide attacks and the need to have people die as martyrs to promote the cause. Murad came out with the idea of dive-crashing a commercial aircraft at the CIA headquarters in Virginia during a casual conversation with Yousef. There was no specific plan for its execution. Murad’s idea is that he will board any American commercial aircraft pretending to be an ordinary passenger. Then he will hijack said aircraft, control its cockpit and dive-crash it at the CIA headquarters. There will be no bomb or any explosive that he will use in its execution. It is simply a suicidal mission that he is very much willing to execute.

These very first imaginings of jihad on a grand and global scale went beyond the classical jihad to defend Muslim lands, fought in Afghanistan in the 1980s and Bosnia in the 1990s. They were a jihadist mutation and escalation that sought to fight a perceived worldwide array of enemies of Islam on multiple fronts, all at once, with symbolic and mass-casualty acts of terrorism. It was a vision of jihad born not of the rustic battlefield but of the globalized city. Yousef sought to claim these attacks in the name of “The Liberation Army,” as he did for the World Trade Center bombing when he called the New York Police Department from JFK airport before casually flying out of the country. The Liberation Army saw France and Great Britain among its global enemies too. But the army did not exist, not beyond Yousef’s ability to assemble an ad hoc cell of operatives.

Of course, Yousef and Murad were not the first terrorists to plot attacks using commercial aircraft. According to David Rapoport’s famous “waves of terrorism”

469 Abdul Hakim Murad, After Debriefing Report, January 20, 1995, para. m.
470 Mendoza, “Philippine Jihad Inc.,” 166.
471 Ibid., 165.
thesis, aircraft hijackings were a common motif of the third wave, which is most closely associated with the likes of Carlos the Jackal and other leftist-styled revolutionaries who adopted the Palestinian cause in the 1970s.\footnote{David C. Rapoport, “The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism” in Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 57.} Yet these aviation attacks were typically a form of hostage-taking designed to control the movement of a certain group of people in a dramatic way in order to publicize the cause and extract concessions through negotiation. The tactical innovation of the Yousef cell was to use existing technology for something completely, horrifically new: to turn a commercial aircraft and its passengers into a weapon of war deployed to maximize casualties. This innovation appears as a hybridization of the foregoing tactic of international hijackings in the name of the Palestinian struggle with the brutal warfare of the Afghan jihad, which sought not to negotiate with but to destroy a superpower.

Once Yousef, Murad and Khalid Sheikh Muhammad had the insight that a devastating new weapon could be created by simply reimagining the use of existing technology, it is plausible that they had begun to consider the many potential targets vulnerable to such a weapon. Rafael Garcia, the Filipino computer analyst, recalls that, separate from the Bojinka plot, the cell had indeed considered a plan to fly planes into multiple US targets:

> Then we found another document that discussed a second alternative to crash the 11 planes into selected targets in the United States instead of just blowing them up in the air. These included the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia; the World Trade Center in New York; the Sears Tower in Chicago; the TransAmerica Tower in San Francisco; and the White House in Washington, DC. Murad himself was to fly the plane that would be crashed into the CIA headquarters.\footnote{Rafael M. Garcia, “Decoding Bojinka,” Newsbreak, November 15, 2001.}

By the time Yousef and his associates fled the Philippines they had thoroughly tested the aviation security system in Southeast Asia. Yousef specialized in making chemical bombs with simple timing devices that could pass undetected through airport metal detectors. But his tests were not without loss of life. As a trial, he took Philippines Airlines Flight 434 to the Philippines city of Cebu, planted a bomb under one of the seats, before disembarking for the plane’s onward flight to Tokyo. On December 11,
1994, the small explosive device detonated mid-air under a Japanese passenger, killing him and injuring ten others, and sabotaging the plane’s controls. The flight was forced to make an emergency landing in Okinawa. The targeting of a local, Southeast Asian airline for the trial would have suited Yousef, lessening the risk of international scrutiny during his preparations for the primary attacks. Perhaps to that end also, the following day someone called the Associated Press office in Manila to claim the attack in the name of Abu Sayyaf. Indeed, the bombing was not connected to “international terrorism” until the findings of the Philippine police investigation into the Bojinka plot filtered out the following year.

Looking back at the mid-1990s, it is difficult to think of another part of the world that offered an assemblage of elements more suited to the advent of global jihadism than rapidly globalizing Southeast Asia. At the time, Bin Laden and his al-Qaeda associates were isolated in impoverished Sudan. Afghanistan was in civil war. Algerian jihadists were mired in a bloody conflict with a military dictatorship. Bosnia-Herzegovina’s conflict with Yugoslavia was, akin to Afghanistan before it, a classical jihad to secure Muslim land, but without the glamour of a superpower adversary. Meanwhile, Southeast Asia assembled a number of components in a unique combination. The Asian economic miracle, not yet exposed by the 1998 financial crisis, had provided the region’s capitals the modern and globally connected infrastructure required for the accelerated pace and extended reach of global jihad. The region was experiencing an aviation boom such that it offered a ready supply of commercial aircraft to experiment with tactically and, potentially, to weaponize. Finally, and crucially, it was home to a preexisting assemblage of jihadists which, once tapped in to, offered a range of capabilities, from safe haven and training camps in the remote undergoverned spaces of the archipelago to resource mobilization in the regions’ globalizing cities.

**Global Jihad meets Jemaah Islamiyah**

In his interrogation by the Philippine police, Abdul Hakim Murad was categorical in stating that the only militant group Ramzi Yousef had contact with in Southeast Asia was Abu Sayyaf. Murad also denied any knowledge of Yousef’s connections with

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Islamic charities, and thus any knowledge of the funding relationship with Osama bin Laden, via the latter’s brother-in-law, Jamal Khalifa.\textsuperscript{475} The investigation, however, had revealed not just a connection to bin Laden financing but also the existence of a foreign export trading company, Konsojya, perhaps also to channel funds to the Yousef cell and as a pretext for its operatives to travel across the region.

Konsojaya SDN BHD was incorporated in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on June 2, 1994. Its board of directors was a mix of local Malaysian businessmen, members of the Yousef cell, and members of Jemaah Islamiyah. Wali Khan Amin Shah, the Afghani, was on the board, as was Riduan bin Isomuddin (alias Hambali) and his wife from Sabah, Noralwizah Lee.\textsuperscript{476} As this point in time, however, neither the authorities in the Philippines nor Malaysia had identified the growing presence of Jemaah Islamiyah. Crucially, then, they were unaware that the Yousef cell, more than linking up with just one local militant group, had in fact embedded itself in an assemblage of jihadists, composed primarily of Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah, an assemblage that gave the group operational reach across archipelagic Southeast Asia.

Although Yousef himself was based primarily in Manila, the totality of evidence indicates that the Bojinka plot was a Southeast Asian operation. In this regard, Jemaah Islamiyah provided assistance to the group in Malaysia that was directed from the top and went beyond Hambali and Konsojaya. In 1994 JI Amir Abdullah Sungkar instructed Mantiqi I treasurer Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana to rent a safe house in Kuala Lumpur for use by two members of the Yousef cell, Wali Khan Amin Shah and Mohanad Shabana. Without being told the purpose of their visit, Faiz was to see to anything else the men might need while in Malaysia. Not long after his arrival, Wali Khan asked how he could acquire a large quantity of syringes. Faiz directed him to his younger brother Fatih, who lived in Singapore, a regional hub for medical services. There Wali Khan succeeded in purchasing 500 syringes. Recalling the episode, one of Wali Khan’s JI hosts says that back then he had no idea syringes can be fashioned into detonators for improvised explosives.\textsuperscript{477} Sometime later, Faiz checked on the safe house

\textsuperscript{475} Abdul Hakim Murad, Debriefing Report, February 8, 1995.
\textsuperscript{476} Mendoza, “Philippine Jihad Inc.,” 172-173.
\textsuperscript{477} Interview with senior Mantiqi I member, August 23, 2011.
to find the door unlocked and the house abandoned. Inside he discovered there had been a fire in the kitchen and the basin in the bathroom had been dismantled. According to the JI host, “I thought, these Arab guys, they are so rough. They don’t know how to use this equipment or what?” “Only later on,” he says, “did I realize what they were doing in the apartment – that they could be preparing bombs.” As we have seen, this would not be the last time that a Yousef cell bomb maker sets fire to an apartment.

The Yousef cell’s main base, then, was the so-called “bomb factory” Ramzi Yousef established in Manila. But the cell also attempted to source bomb components, and to at least test them, in Malaysia. This fact, along with the wide-ranging casing of flights conducted by cell members across the region, points to the conclusion that Bojinka was a Southeast Asian aviation-based attack. The alternative name for the plot, “Manila Air,” fatally overlooks the regional scale of the aborted operation.

When Wali Khan was arrested after the second fire in Manila, naturally he fled south towards the support network of jihadist assemblage, ending up in Malaysia again. He was arrested by Malaysian police almost a year later after he was found working as a restaurant proprietor on the Malaysian resort island of Langkawi. Ramzi Yousef was eventually arrested in Pakistan. Both, along with the pilot Abdul Hakim Murad, were tried and jailed in the US, where they remain in prison.

In and of itself, the Bojinka operation was a failure. In hindsight, however, before it was exposed, the operation taught its operatives a number of key lessons. First among these lessons was that a large-scale aviation-based attack launched from Southeast Asia was possible, given the prevailing air transport infrastructure and the opportunity to integrate with a regional jihadist assemblage. On a personal front, the operation appears to have established a close working relationship between Yousef cell’s most important operative still at large, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad and Jemaah Islamiya’s Hambali. According to Ken Conboy, based on a reading of some of the Hambali CIA

478 Ibid.
479 Interview with senior officer, Special Task Force for Operations and Counter-Terrorism, Royal Malaysian Police, February 18, 2011.
From a traditional Darul Islam background, Hambali hailed from the small village of Pamokolan in West Java. Despite this provincial background, from around the time of Bojinka, Hambali embarked on an odyssey which would make him JI’s most travelled operative, serving as the group’s principal liaison with foreign jihadists. In 1996 he played host again to Khalid Sheikh Muhammad during the latter’s trip to Malaysia and Indonesia. Later the same year Khalid Sheikh Muhammad reciprocated by inviting Hambali to Afghanistan. In Afghanistan he spent three or four days meeting with Osama bin Laden, at the conclusion of which the two informally agreed to work together on “targets of mutual interest,” according to a footnote in Khalid Sheikh Muhammad’s Guantanamo Bay file. Osama bin Laden, who at least in part, financed Bojinka, had recently relocated from Sudan to Afghanistan to live under the protection of the Taliban. Later, in 1996, he would issue his first significant fatwa, calling for attacks on the US military in the Arabian peninsula, which he saw as occupying Islam’s holiest cities.

Conclusion
In light of the Bojinka plot and with the benefit of hindsight, 9/11 can be seen as the culmination of six years’ development by trial and error that began in Southeast Asia in


481 Department of Defense, “Riduan Isomuddin,” JTF-GTMO Detainee Assessment, October 30, 2008, p. 3. It should be noted that the reliability of this and other data produced under US government “enhanced interrogation techniques” is subject to dispute. In this chapter I have cited such data only where it is consonant with information from more reliable sources. It should be further noted that according to a confidential report by the International Committee of the Red Cross on the treatment of Hambali, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad and other “high value detainees” in CIA custody, “in many cases, the ill-treatment to which [the detainees] were subjected while held in the CIA program, either singly or in combination, constituted torture.” International Committee of the Red Cross, “ICRC Report on the Treatment of Fourteen ‘High Value Detainees’ in CIA Custody,” February 2007, p. 26. http://assets.nybooks.com/media/doc/2010/04/22/icrc-report.pdf

482 Interview with Farihin, alias Yasir, Jakarta, November 24, 2011.

The continuity between Bojinka and 9/11 was rather downplayed, however, by the official US government 9/11 Commission Report. Nevertheless, the report mentions that Khalid Sheikh Muhammad had undergone a process of “learning” from previous plots:

KSM claims that the earlier bombing of the World Trade Center taught him that bombs and explosives could be problematic, and that he needed to graduate to a more novel form of attack. He maintains that he and Yousef began thinking about using aircraft as weapons while working on the Manila air/Bojinka plot, and speculated about striking the World Trade Center and CIA headquarters as early as 1995.

To appreciate the full significance of the origins of 9/11, then, we must consider how, to a great extent, the 9/11 operation centred on the same key actors, relationships, infrastructure and vision as Bojinka, something we do in the following chapter. Critically, as we shall see, 9/11 drew on a multiplicity of functions and inputs across the very same diverse Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage. In this way, for Khalid Sheikh Muhammad the region presented the opportunity of a vast mobilization space for global jihad.

Critically, the execution of 9/11 would rely on the fact that the regional assemblage within which the Bojinka plot was embedded had not been detected by anyone. The failure to identify the involvement of Jemaah Islamiyah or the significance of Hambali is illustrated in a network diagram of the plot produced by the Philippine police, shown in figure 1. The Abu Sayyaf Group is the only Southeast Asian jihadist organization represented in connection with Bojinka.

To be fair, it is not clear how much the authorities in the Philippines and Malaysia had been able to cooperate in the mid-1990s to understand a transnational threat that, at the time, no was one expecting to see emerge in a Southeast Asia more peaceful and prosperous than ever in its modern history. The Malaysian authorities concede that after

484 The investigative journalist Peter Lance goes even further to say that Bojinka and 9/11 were essentially the same operation. For his comprehensive account and timeline of 9/11, see Peter Lance, 1000 Years For Revenge: International Terrorism and the FBI—The Untold Story (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003).

the arrest of Wali Khan Amin Shah and his handover to the Americans there was no follow up investigation into Hambali. Consequently, the presence of Jemaah Islamiyah in Malaysia would remain undetected until 2000, when the 9/11 attack was already under way. At that time, Hambali, largely due to his relationship with Khalid Sheikh Muhammad that had been deepened by the Bojinka experience, would serve as the most important broker connecting al-Qaeda to Southeast Asian jihadists. For both of these men, the dark vision and grand promise of the Bojinka plot remained alive.

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486 Interview with senior officer, Special Task Force for Operations and Counter-Terrorism, Royal Malaysian Police, February 18, 2011
Figure 1. Philippines National Police diagram derived from the Bojinka investigation (Peter Lance)
In the wake of the attacks of September 11 it was perhaps inevitable that the discovery of Jemaah Islamiyah in late 2001—a hitherto unheard of Southeast Asian terrorist group—would be seen through the prism of al-Qaeda. Terrorism experts rushed to press with claims that the two were in fact the same organization. Zachary Abuza in his *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia* described Jemaah Islamiyah as al-Qaeda’s “regional arm”. 487 Likewise, Rohan Gunaratna in *Inside Al Qaeda* described JI as “Al Qaeda’s Asian arm,”488 and went so far as to criticise Australian intelligence officials who “did not believe that JI was under Al Qaeda control.”489

More skeptical area and country specialists sought to show that Jemaah Islamiyah was very much a local organization with deep Indonesian roots and an autonomous character. In a series of investigative reports, the International Crisis Group unearthed JI’s origins in the indigenous Darul Islam movement.490 From this perspective, al-Qaeda plays a peripheral role to that of Indonesia-centric jihadists largely motivated by local drivers including, above all, the desire to impose Islamic law within an Islamic state in Indonesia.

The academic debate over the importance of local versus global factors was paralleled in jihadist networks, with actors emphasizing one scale over the other depending on their own position in the network or their own particular experience. Perhaps not surprisingly, the architect of the 9/11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, took a global, top-down perspective, with himself positioned at the top. Thus Egyptian journalist Yosri Fouda, who in 2002 found and interviewed KSM at length before his capture,

489 Ibid., 246n23.
reflects the jihadist’s ego-centrism when he writes that the planner of 9/11 was capable of organising multiple operational theatres while preparing his main attack:

[KSM] retained his close links in the Far East and started building a large regional network, based on four territorial organisations: Malaysia, Singapore and southern Thailand; Indonesia, except for Sulawesi and Kalimantan; the southern Philippines, the eastern Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah, Kalimantan and Sulawesi, Borneo and Brunei; and Irian Jaya and Australia. 491

The global versus local debate, however, overlooks the most significant development in militant Islamism in Southeast Asia at the turn of the 20th century: mobilization at the regional scale. Regional jihad, as it might be called, emerged from an assemblage of both global and local jihadists—often in close cooperation with one another and very rarely in open conflict—gathered loosely, discursively, on the basis of a militant pan-Islamist consensus that Islam needs defending from its existential enemies, both religious and secular. Regional jihad coincided with the high point of coherence for the regional jihadist assemblage that we have traced over time and space since the mid-1980s.

It is a measure of the distributed and heterogeneous quality of the assemblage that the militants embedded within it often disagreed over whether it was more important to fight local enemies or global, Western, ones. Such disagreement illustrates a central quality of assemblages: their coherence may be challenged by their own internal debates and contradictions. 492 A significant minority of highly mobile and motivated jihadists, however, exploited the regional assemblage of human and material resources, safe havens, training camps, conflict zones, and transportation networks, in order to wage violent jihad against both local and global targets. With access to the Southeast Asian assemblage, entrepreneurial global jihadists who prioritized attacking the US—like KSM and Hambali—were able to transcend organizational and territorial borders in order to mobilize attacks in the region despite the fact that for many jihadist foot soldiers, especially those in Indonesia, local concerns remained the priority.


492 Debate and contradiction within assemblages in emphasized, for example, in Tania Murray Li, “Practices of assemblage and community forest management,” Economy and Society 36 (2007), 265.
Critically, the mobilization of the regional assemblage for attacks against the US and its allies continued the process begun with the Bojinka plot in the mid-1990s. I argue that it was the human and material mobilization opportunities presented by the Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage, opportunities discovered during the Bojinka plot, that drew al-Qaeda into close alliance with Jemaah Islamiyah. Indeed, jihad in the mid-1990s and early 2000s shared common elements: both featured a prominent personal connection between Khalid Sheikh Muhammad and Hambali, two relatively autonomous brokers and entrepreneurs of violence; and both enjoyed the financial support of Osama bin Laden.

During this period, the Southeast Asian assemblage greatly extended the geographical reach of al-Qaeda’s global attacks and brought mass casualty terrorism, like that of the 2002 Bali bombings, to the region for the first time. Rather than focus on the Bali bombings, here I examine a number of operations, some of them less well known because they were planned but never executed, in order to illustrate certain aspects of how the assemblage worked in practice. As we shall see, such was the importance of Southeast Asia to the mobilization of global jihad, the region played a central role in the planning phase of the 9/11 attacks and came very close to being the launch pad for a second, Southeast Asian-led, “9/11.”

The Rise of Global Jihad

On February 23, 1998, Osama bin Laden, in a statement that the orientalist scholar Bernard Lewis described as “a magnificent piece of eloquent, at times even poetic Arabic prose,” declared a “World Islamic Front” under the banner of “Jihad against Jews and Crusaders”. Notwithstanding bin Laden’s lack of jurisprudential qualifications, the statement contained a ruling, or fatwa, which declared it the individual duty of all Muslims to “kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military” and to do this “in any country in which it is possible to do it.”

The timing of the 1998 fatwa saw Jemaah Islamiyah at a crossroads. In Indonesia, President Suharto was forced to resign amid riots and protests in May that year. His regime, which had chased the group’s leaders into self-exile, was disintegrating. Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’asyir anticipated their homecomings, as opportunity began to open in Indonesia for an array of new political players.

The coincidence of the fatwa and the fall of Suharto provoked a debate within JI about strategic priorities: to what extent should the organization support bin Laden’s radical global agenda when real political change was now possible in Indonesia? How should solidarities be prioritized: the Muslim community at home or the Muslim community of the world, the ummah? Jemaah Islamiyah was not alone in facing the local versus global dilemma. In light of bin Laden’s call to global jihad, jihadist groups around the world had been prompted to reconsider their objectives. According to Fawaz Gerges, the international jihadist movement became divided between nationalists who favoured local jihad and transnationalists who favoured global jihad. The overwhelming majority, however, sided with the nationalists and rejected al-Qaeda’s global war against America on the strategic grounds that it was unlikely to be successful.  

Sungkar and Ba’asyir found themselves in an invidious position. As much as they were set on the fight for an Islamic state in Indonesia, years in exile in the Malacca hinterland had transnationalised their organization to an extent they had never anticipated nor intended. In early 1998, perhaps just prior to the bin Laden fatwa, they were two of a procession of jihadist leaders who visited Afghanistan to meet with bin Laden and discuss his proposal for a united jihadist front. Others who made the same pilgrimage included Rifa’i Ahmad Taha, a leader of JI’s Egyptian namesake, Gama’a Islamiyya, who went so far as to co-sign bin Laden’s February 23 statement. The fallout from the fatwa, however, was so great that Gama’a Islamiyya later forced Ahmad to rescind his support. The 1998 fatwa was so controversial, Gerges observes, that it even divided al-Qaeda leader Ayam al-Zawahiri’s own Islamic Jihad organization.

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The position ultimately taken by Sungkar and Ba’asyir reflected the conflicted nature of the local versus global debate in the jihadist community. Following their visit to Afghanistan they settled into an ambiguous position of supporting the fatwa in principle but doing very little to further it in practice. In a letter from Malaysia dated August 3, 1998, they disseminated the call to jihad against America through the Darul Islam network, now a constellation of factions but still Indonesia’s most extensive network of Muslim militants, and thus a large part of the regional assemblage. Bin Laden’s message, they wrote, is that “the most important obligation for the Muslim community now, after faith, is to work hard to free the Arabian Peninsula from the grip of Allah’s enemy, America (Jews and Christians).” Consistent with the spirit of the fatwa, “this struggle should be prioritized over others,” the letter said. The argument thus accurately represented what is now seen as a turn-of-millennium mutation in jihadist ideology and strategy, led by al-Qaeda. That is, a transition from targeting the “near enemy” (local “infidel” regimes) to the “far enemy” (the United States and its allies). Southeast Asian jihadists had been exposed to global jihad already, and earlier than most, from their collaboration with Ramzi Yousef and the Bojinka operatives. But they were a small cell on the fringe the broader movement. Al-Qaeda sought to make global jihad mainstream.

This shift to the global embodied a realist logic: defeating the American hegemon at the heart of the Islamic world was the best way to advance Muslim causes elsewhere. Or as the JI leaders said, relating what bin Laden had put to them:

If the Arabian Peninsula, as the source of Islam and the holy place of Mecca, can be freed from the grip of infidel America, its land as well as its wealth, then God willing the struggle to establish Islam around the world will be smoother. Most probably one of the causes of the deadlock and difficulty in establishing Islam everywhere now is that the Arabian Peninsula is still trampled by the impure feet of American infidels.

Although Sungkar and Ba’asyir faithfully reported bin Laden’s message, their letter notably avoided giving any formal endorsement of the fatwa, much less an undertaking

499 Ibid.
that JI itself would take part in the global jihad. They did, however, agree to facilitate
the travel of anyone who wished to join bin Laden in Kandahar where, they wrote, he
was in the process of forming a World Islamic Jihad Front (Jabah Jihadiyah Alam
Islami) to fight America.

It was on the basis of this qualified support for the 1998 fatwa at the senior levels of JI
that a close working relationship between the group and al-Qaeda was forged. The
following year JI began sending members for training in Bin Laden’s camps in
Afghanistan. Meanwhile, Abdullah Sungkar had the Mantiqi heads read the fatwa to
their members during the group’s regular study circles. Some members were
enthusiastic about the fatwa, but others, especially in the more insular JI and Darul
Islam homelands of Java disagreed with it on strategic grounds. These local jihadists
pointed to the opinion of Moro Islamic Liberation Front leader Salamat Hasyim, who
was not about to subordinate his vision of a Bangsamoro homeland to Osama bin
Laden’s global agenda. Hasyim reportedly said diplomatically, “The fatwa is good, but
it’s impossible to apply in Mindanao because the situation is unsuitable.”

Nasir Abas recalls that as the head of JI in Sabah, Malaysia, he was ordered to have the
Arabic text of the fatwa read aloud and translated for the benefit of those whose Arabic
was limited. Abas says he refused to follow the order because he disagreed with
designating civilians as legitimate targets; it is not known if any other JI leaders took
such a principled stand. The Mantiqi I chief Hambali, coming from his experience
with the Bojinka plot, was galvanized by the fatwa. He searched out the original Arabic
text on the Internet, had it translated, and distributed it to his Mantiqi I subordinates.

Not long after Hambali played a central role in establishing, in early 1999, a training
program for JI members to be undertaken in al-Qaeda camps, after training in the
Philippines had become increasingly unfeasible due to pushback from the Philippine
army. Abdullah Sungkar sent Hambali to Karachi to meet Khalid Sheikh Muhammad to
see what options for training were available. With KSM’s help, soon formal training ties

500 Solahudin, _NII sampai JI_, 251.
501 Interview with Nasir Abas, Jakarta, October 9, 2011.
502 Conboy, _The Second Front_, 76.
with al-Qaeda were established, with JI recruits to be sent to al-Qaeda’s Al-Faruq camp in Afghanistan. The program was designed to facilitate small numbers of JI members in acquiring highly specialized military skills, including urban warfare and bomb-making. Later the same year, Hambali and one of his closest associates, Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, brought the first two JI students, Zaini Zakaria and Zamzuri, to Kandahar, the location of Al Faruq. Both were Malaysians and, as would become useful later, one of the two, Zakaria, had trained to fly single-engine aircraft.

Despite such cooperation with al-Qaeda, it is striking how much JI, generally speaking, became divided along territorial lines between the internationally oriented, Malaysia-based members of Mantiqi I—many of whom now saw themselves in a strategic alliance with al-Qaeda against the US—and the Indonesia-based members of Mantiqi II, who were focused on local developments and political opportunities in Indonesia. Senior Mantiqi II leaders such as Abu Rusydan and Achmad Roichan made two arguments against the 1998 fatwa. First, they said that the priority was jihad against the local apostate regime, the Indonesian government, because this followed the example of the prophet who fought his local enemies first, before spreading Islam beyond the Arabian Peninsula. Second, they said that jihad required proper military preparation, or i‘dad (training), and JI was not yet prepared. They argued that just as prayer cannot be offered before ablutions, jihad cannot be undertaken before i‘dad. In the Darul Islam community there was a common view that the vigorous US response to the bombing of its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the first attack since the Bin Laden fatwa, was an illustration of the folly of jihad against America. In retaliation for the embassy bombings, on August 20, 1998, the US had launched cruise missiles at al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, killing dozens of militants. Veteran Darul Islam leader Gaos Taufik observed that if Darul Islam was still too weak to fight the Indonesian state, as he believed it was, they would be crazy to take on America. Indeed, the doctrine of out-of-area global jihad was such a radical departure from the foregoing tradition of classical jihad in defense of Muslim land that it sparked similar controversy even within al-Qaeda itself. According to Vahid Brown, in the period prior to 9/11 the internal

503 Ibid., 79.
504 Solahudin, NII sampai JI, 251.
505 Ibid., 250.
divisions over the decision to wage jihad against the United States were so great they “severely degraded al-Qa’ida’s organizational capacity.”

Torn between the local and the global, Jemaah Islamiyah experienced a moment of ideological drift when, as senior Mantiqi I leader Abu Rusydan has described it, the ideological direction of the organization was “still up in the air.” But the outbreak in 1999 of communal violence between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia’s eastern provinces saw action paper over ideological division. In January 1999 rival Muslim and Christian gangs clashed in the streets of Ambon. The following year the fighting spread to the town of Poso in Central Sulawesi. The scale of inter-religious conflict was unprecedented in modern Indonesian history and led to a rise in communal tensions across the country, doing much to destabilize the administration of Indonesia’s first democratically elected president, Abdurrahman Wahid. For many Jemaah Islamiyah members and other politically militant Muslims, Ambon and Poso represented legitimate defensive jihads to protect the local Muslim community from Christian attacks.

Initially, Abdullah Sungkar, ever the conservative, was non-committal about Ambon. He suspected that the fighting was more a communal conflict than a classical defensive jihad. According to one account, he only shifted his position after word from Osama bin Laden. The JI cleric Mukhlas, who was travelling to Afghanistan, was asked to seek bin Laden’s opinion on Ambon. Bin Laden’s reply was that to protect Islamic interests JI should take action. Such was the esteem bin Laden was held in, “that’s when we decided we needed to be involved,” a senior Mantiqi I member has said. But JI had already fallen behind other militant groups in capitalizing on the conflict. Since the start of the fighting Ambon had become a magnet for jihadists across Indonesia, including previously nonviolent salafis—most notably Laskar Jihad, led by Jafar Umar Thalib—and new Darul Islam splinter groups. One of the most active groups was Mujahidin

507 Interview with Abu Rusydan, Jakarta, October 4, 2011.
509 Interview with senior Mantiqi I member, December 6, 2010.
Kompak, a military offshoot of a Kompak (Komite Aksi Penanggulangan Akibat Krisis), the aid and development arm of Dewan Dakwah. Mujahidin Kompak recruited Jemaah Islamiyah members to the conflict who were impatient with the lack of action from the JI heirarchy. JI had been missing a golden opportunity for proselytizing and recruitment. The circumspect leaders of Mantiqi II had also been reluctant to engage in armed jihad within Indonesia’s borders. During a visit to Jakarta, Abdullah Sungkar, having taken his cue from Bin Laden, confronted senior Mantiqi II leader Achmad Roichan about why they were taking so long to act. Roichan responded that JI was not yet ready, that it needed to do more education and training to build up its social base before engaging in jihad. By now Sungkar was himself impatient with such an approach.510

Ultimately there would be much more consensus around local jihad in Indonesia than global jihad against the West. But, on the whole, mobilization around local conflict zones in Indonesia would grow the assemblage available global jihadists, who, like Hambali, knew that one field of battle could be a gateway to the other. In Poso, more than anywhere else in Indonesia, JI hoped that by consolidating its presence, centered on Tanah Runtuh in Poso city, it could establish sufficient territory for a safe base (qoidah aminah), a prerequisite for building an Islamic state.511 With this vision, the conflict in Poso united both local and global jihadists.512

**Hambali takes charge**

In the 1990s Abdullah Sungkar, a strategic thinker who had retreated from Indonesia rather than face the heavy repression of the 1980s, emphasized the need to prepare the ground for an Islamic state and to avoid taking military action prematurely. Once, when he was asked about the need for jihad, he cited hadith and answered, “Don’t ask for jihad when it is not due. We fear when it is due you will be the one to run away.”513 On regime change in Indonesia, Australian JI member Jack Roche remembers Sungkar’s

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513 Interview with senior Mantiqi I leader, December 6, 2010.
long-game approach: “I don’t think it’s going to happen in my lifetime and quite possibly in the generation after me, but one day, insyallah….” As we have seen, this stance did not stop JI from assisting in the Bojinka plot. But on the whole, most of the 1990s had been rather quiet in Indonesia at a time when other jihadist groups around the world, including Gama’a Islamiyyah in Egypt and even Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines had been actively attacking the local infidel regime.

Hambali, however, was not patient like Sungkar. During the course of the 1990s he appears to have become an efficient and disciplined jihadist entrepreneur, able to marshal jihadist actors and materials from across the assemblage into ad hoc cells capable of conducting violent attacks. Mukhlas, who first met Hambali in Malaysia in the 1980s, would later describe his character as that of “just an ordinary person,” not at all like his fearsome image in the media. Yet he was also, Mukhlas acknowledged, a “dynamic entrepreneur and trader.” Typically, his attacks defied organizational and territorial boundaries, much to the irritation of some senior JI figures. There was jealousy towards Hambali, too, at the elevated status he enjoyed as a result of his close relationship with al-Qaeda. As the leader of Mantiqi I, he was already in charge of the wealthiest division of JI. But al-Qaeda gave him access to even greater resources, sponsoring specific attacks if Hambali requested it. According to Indonesian counter-terrorism chief Tito Karnavian, who interviewed Hambali about the process in Guantanamo Bay, “Hambali as head of Mantiqi I, would submit a proposal via secret communication channels, usually by e-mail, about a plan for an operation or attack with details about the amount of funding needed. If it was approved, al-Qaeda would send the funds by courier.” Despite Jemaah Islamiyah’s pretentions to military command and control, Hambali sidestepped these seniors with impunity. In the late 1990s, drawing on his knowledge of the assemblage and building on his experience with Bojinka, Hambali led a number of joint Jemaah Islamiyah-al-Qaeda operations in Southeast Asia.

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514 Interview with Jack Roche, September 26, 2011.
His first scheme was an ultimately unsuccessful plot to attack Western targets in Singapore in 1999. This, as it transpired, was Hambali’s only global jihadist plot for which a now ailing Sungkar would still be alive. Tellingly, during the initial planning phase of the operation Hambali kept Abdullah Sungkar in the dark, exploiting the fact that Sungkar had undergone a heart operation in June of that year and was in now failing health. Sungkar’s death in late 1999 and his replacement as amir by Abu Bakar Ba’asyir only further emboldened Hambali. Ba’asyir, a much less commanding leader than Sungkar, appears to have given Hambali free reign to wage jihad against Western and local targets as he saw fit, allowing him to organize and execute operations outside JI’s formal command structure, in collaboration with al-Qaeda. To that end Hambali set about forming special operations units, kept secret from the broader JI membership, trained in bomb-making and prepared to strike US targets.

Ba’asyir appears to have been kept abreast of Hambali’s operations, if not their precise details. In Ba’asyir’s view the phase of forbearance under the previous amir was over and now was the time for action. According to Hashim bin Abas, in early 2000 in Kuala Lumpur Ba’asyir issued a religious edict or fatwa in which he declared “that our Jammah [community] has to conduct dakwah [proselytizing] and jihad (waging war or qital) concurrently.” Hashim recalls that Hambali, interpreting the jihad component of the ruling, ordered him to set up a team of twelve recruits to prepare for unspecified operations.

In an early example of how Hambali mobilized components from across the assemblage to wage jihad at a regional scale, in May 2000 he directed Imam Samudra, a fiery Indonesian and veteran of Afghanistan who was under his command in Malaysia, to attack Christians in Indonesia in retaliation for the violence against Muslims in Ambon. The operation would reach across islands, transgressing nation-state boundaries, territorial command boundaries within JI, and the boundary between mainland and archipelagic Southeast Asia. Explosives for the attack were sourced from Southern Thailand and smuggled across the border to the Malaysian state of Kelantan, which

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517 Senior Mantiqi I member, pers. com.
518 Hashim bin Abas, interrogation deposition, Densus 88, May 7, 2000, 3.
519 Abas, interrogation deposition, 7.
borders the southern Thai province of Narathiwat. There they were stored at a new JI boarding school, known as Lukmanul Hakiem Kelantan. From Kelantan, a Singaporean JI member transported the explosives south, down through the Malaysian peninsula into the Malacca hinterland, stopping at JI’s Lukmanul Hakiem school in Ulu Tiram. From Ulu Tiram it was a short drive to the Johor Strait separating Malaysia from Singapore, from where the operative took a forty-five minute boat trip to the small Indonesian island of Batam, located just south of Singapore. From Batam, Imam Samudra shipped the explosives to the adjacent Indonesian island of Sumatera, within JI’s Mantiqi II.520 There, unbeknownst to JI’s Mantiqi II leader, Abdullah Anshori, Samudra homed in on soft Christian targets.

On May 28 a bomb exploded in a Protestant church in Medan and in a Catholic church on Jl. Pemuda, Medan, the following day. No one was killed but dozens of churchgoers were injured because the first bomb was timed to explode during Sunday prayers. Imam Samudra circulated an email taking responsibility for the attack. He claimed to have discovered a conspiracy by a Christian Army to turn Medan into a second Ambon; the bombings, he said, were both a warning to Christians and revenge for Christian crimes against Muslims in Ambon. “Oh Allah,” he wrote, “give us the ability and strength to explode more infidel headquarters that camouflage themselves as churches.”521

In the first conscious effort to assemble jihadists at the regional scale, Hambali and his mostly Malaysian and Singaporean associates sought to create an umbrella organization for regional jihad in Southeast Asia. In 2000, leading Mantiqi I operatives convened and hosted a series of meetings in Malaysia of what they called the Rabitatul Muhahidin (Mujahidin League), to which militants from across the region were invited. The guest list included militants from the Abu Sayyaf and MILF in the southern Philippines, Jemaah Salafi in southern Thailand, the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation in Burma, and a group formed by Malaysian veterans of Afghanistan-Pakistan in 1996 who called themselves the Malaysian Mujahidin Group (Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, KMM).

520 “Jemaah Islamiyah—One Exposure, One Confession,” TV3 (Malaysia), broadcast April 2, 2004.
521 Tentara Islam Batalyon Badar to mushola@yahoogroups.com, June 3, 2000, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mushola/message/2256
The KMM was a small underground group of jihadists who saw themselves as militant defenders of the mainstream Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), with which they were politically aligned. The KMM filled a niche for Malaysian jihadists who did not want to be seen as disloyal to PAS clerics by joining rival organization, such as JI, led by, foreign, Indonesian clerics. However, in another telling example of how the assemblage effect militated against the usefulness of neat organizational charts, in the late 1990s a number of KMM members had become radicalized by senior JI cleric Abu Jibril. In 2000, under the influence of Hambali, they took part in attacks in Malaysia against “infidel” targets. In late 2000 KMM members assassinated a local Christian politician, Joe Ferdandez. The assassination was followed by attacks on Christian and Hindu places of worship. These attacks, carried out in collaboration with JI members, not only ran counter to KMM’s original purpose but also defied JI’s Mantiqi command structure, in which Malaysia was meant to be preserved as a refuge and area for fundraising.\textsuperscript{522} Jihadists from KMM would go on to take part in al-Qaeda led operations too, as we shall see below.

As for the Mujahidin League, it served to enhance jihadist cooperation across the assemblage at the time, despite never consolidating into an enduring institution. At its second meeting, in June 2000, the league facilitated an ambitious bombing operating that fully exploited the region as a fluid mobilization space. Chaired by Abu Bakar Ba’asyir himself, the second meeting took place just as the MILF’s massive Camp Abu Bakar headquarters had fallen to the Philippines armed forces after months of bombardment. Consequently, JI had been forced to retreat from its training outpost, Camp Hudaibiyah, which had then been overrun by government troops. In response to these setbacks, the league passed a resolution to retaliate against the Philippines government. A bombing operation was then put together in record speed. The operation was overseen by the Jemaah Islamiyah member who at the time was the most active in the Philippines, Fathur Rahman al-Gozi. Al-Gozi, who was 29, had spent much of his twenties training in bomb-making in Darul Islam’s Torkham camp in Afghanistan and, later, in Mindanao with the MILF. On August 1 a remotely detonated car bomb exploded outside the residence of the Philippines ambassador in Jakarta, just as the

\textsuperscript{522} Kamarulnizam Abdullah, “Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI): the Links”, \textit{Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism} 4, no. 1, April 2009.
ambassador, Leonides Caday, was leaving in his black Mercedes. A bystander and a
guard were killed and several others were injured. Caday was seriously injured but
survived the attack.

Some analysts might cast the Rabitatul Mujahidin as a failure because it ultimately did
not unite the disparate Muslim militant groups of Southeast Asia into a stable and
enduring coalition. But that would miss the point. The league was just one, admittedly
rather symbolic, manifestation of the long process of jihadist assembling and
reassembling across space and time in Southeast Asia. As a number of assemblage
thinkers have argued, “the key starting point of an assemblage-based analysis of the
social [is] to understand assembling as an ongoing process of forming and sustaining
associations between diverse constituents.”523 But such associations are provisional; just
as assemblages cohere, they can also disperse. As Anderson and McFarlane put it,
“relations may change, new elements may enter, alliances may be broken, new
conjunctions may be fostered.”524 The process underlying the Mujahidin League
assembled operatives, resources and targets from multiple locations across the three
main countries of archipelagic Southeast Asia—Indonesia, Malaysia, and the
Philippines—and would likely have facilitated an attack on the Philippines, regardless
of whether there was an institutionalized league or not.

Sometime in November 2000, Mantiqi I members convened what would turn out to be
the third and final Mujahidin League meeting. At this meeting, held in the Malaysian
border state of Perak, it was agreed to assist Osama bin Laden in carrying out his fatwa
to attack the US.525 A senior Mantiqi I member present at the meeting described the
thinking at the time:

Somebody went to see Osama, I think it was Hambali. And he [Osama]
brought out a map that showed all the Western military forces
surrounding the Arabian peninsula – [like] a hand coming. Then Osama
came to the conclusion that their interests are to capture the whole of
Muslim land. So that’s why Osama came to that fatwa. And we felt that it

523 Ben Anderson et. al., “On Assemblages and Geography,” Dialogues in Human Geography
was true, so JI, Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, basically agreed to the attack on American interests, either military or civilian.\textsuperscript{526}

Indonesia-centric members of Jemaah Islamiyah have since disputed the level of support for the bin Laden fatwa within JI. But Mantiqi I members claim that at the time, most JI leaders were in agreement with the fatwa and that Hambali and his associates had license to carry out attacks against the US across the region. According to the senior Mantiqi I member, “Most of the top personal of JI knew that this Rabitatul Mujahidin had agreed to the fatwa. Basically it means we can have operations across all these members’ [countries] if we wanted to attack Western interests.”\textsuperscript{527}

Meanwhile, Mantiqi I continued its program against Christian churches, hoping to stoke religious conflict in Indonesia and ignite a wave of retaliation against the Christian community. Hambali convened a meeting of key Mantiqi operatives at the office of MNZ Associates, an auditing firm part-owned by Mantiqi I secretary Zulkepli bin Marzuki. In attendance were Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana, Mukhlas, Imam Samudra, Yazid Sufaat, Azhari and Candra Nasrullah. The group agreed to bomb churches on Christmas Eve simultaneously across ten cities in Indonesia. They would fund the operation from a large donation recently made by al-Qaeda and a personal donation from Yazid Sufaat, perhaps the most independently wealthy JI member. Sufaat would contribute US$10,000 of his own money.\textsuperscript{528} Hambali asked Faiz and Zulkepli to travel with him to meet Abu Bakar Ba’asyir to request the Amir’s approval for the attacks. He said he also wanted to get approval for an attack on US military interests in Singapore, a plan he described as from “the sheikh” – this honorific being a common way to indicate Osama bin Laden.\textsuperscript{529}

If Mantiqi I and Mantiqi II disagreed about the extent of support JI should give for the 1998 fatwa and global jihad, it appears that the Amir of the organization was indeed prepared to give tacit approval to Hambali’s out-of-area operations. In November Hambali, Faiz and Zulkepli travelled to Solo and met with Abu Bakar Ba’asyir in a

\textsuperscript{526} Interview with senior Mantiqi I leader, August 16, 2011.

\textsuperscript{527} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{528} Conboy, \textit{The Second Front}, 122-123.

\textsuperscript{529} Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, interrogation deposition, October 22, 2002, para. 17.
hotel near his Ngriki boarding school. Hambali expected he would get JI approval for his operations if he was able to source his own funding. According to the Indonesian police interrogation deposition of Faiz, in Solo Hambali told Ba’asyir, “We have to retaliate against the Christians who have killed Muslims in mosques in Ambon, before they retaliate against us.” Ba’asyir not only agreed to the Christmas Eve attacks but also to the Singapore attack with al-Qaeda. In return, he asked Hambali for a donation for the JI university Mahad Ali in Solo, a request that Hambali considered a while before the brief meeting was brought to an end.

On Christmas Eve, 2000, bombs exploded in eleven cities across Indonesia, killing nineteen people and wounding one hundred and twenty. The death toll would have been much higher if many of the bombs had not been so poorly built and failed to detonate. In justification of the bombings Hambali later said, “They attacked [Muslims] during Id prayers, so we attacked during their festive season”—a reference to the Ambon conflict, which had flared on 19 January 1999, the second day of Idul Fitri celebrations, a day which came to be known as “Bloody Idul Fitri.” But Mantqi I claims at the time of Christian churches storing weapons and inciting violence against Muslims were unfounded.

The bombing campaign failed to spark widespread religious violence, much less unite Muslims in a jihad against Christians across Indonesia. Instead, it united mainstream Muslims and Christians against terrorism, an outcome that much frustrated the bombers. To their apparent surprise, the bombings saw them lose popular support, rather than gain it. Even within JI, Mantqi I found itself criticized by Mantqi II members who considered the bombings counterproductive and were sceptical of the legal basis for attacks against places of worship, such attacks normally being prohibited under Islamic law.

531 Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, interrogation deposition, October 22, 2002, para. 19.
532 Ibid.
533 Interview with senior Mantqi I leader, August 23, 2011.
534 Solahudin, *NII Sampai JI*, 259.
535 Ibid., 260.
536 Ibid., 261.
The Rizal Day Attacks

Five days after the Christmas Eve attacks in Indonesia, on December 30, 2000, a joint MILF-JI operation bombed various targets across Metropolitan Manila in the Philippines in near-simultaneous explosions. Twenty-two people were killed, most of them passengers in a Light Rail Transit train cab. Almost 100 others were injured. Taken together with the church bombings in Indonesia, the transnational attacks during the Christian festive season of 2000 was a stunning display of jihadist geographical reach and logistical coordination across the complex terrain of archipelagic Southeast Asia.

Like the bombing of the Philippines ambassador in Jakarta, the Rizal Day attacks were motivated by the then Estrada government’s ongoing assault against the MILF camp Abu Bakar, which had begun earlier in the year. Despite official MILF rejection of JI, MILF special forces commander Mukhlis Yunos collaborated with Jemaah Islamiyah bomb-maker Fathur Rahman Al-Ghozi in an exchange in which MILF operatives would help JI acquire explosives for use in Indonesia and Jemaah Islamiyah would help assemble the bombs and finance their deployment. The initial strategy was to spread the war in the Southern Philippines to Manila in order to divert the Philippines military from its operation in Mindanao, thus easing the pressure on MILF troops.537

The arrival of Fathur Rahman al-Ghozi’s seniors in Manila, however, threatened to change the target of the operation. Hambali and Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana arrived on December 1 and convened a targeting meeting at which Mukhlis says Hambali himself set the direction for the group’s operation. Hambali, he says, was determined to hit Israeli and American targets. Following the meeting he led a group which included al-Ghozi, Mukhlis and other MILF operatives on a casing operation of the US and Israeli embassies. It was determined, however, that the targets were too well protected. Mukhlis himself overheard the group say that Hambali was convinced that “the US and Israel embassies are difficult targets” because of a lack of access to the main building and the fact that they were well-fortified structures.538 Eventually, Hambali and Faiz left

537 Haji Mukhlis Umpara Yunos, Debriefing Report, May 27 (2003), 4, 8.
538 Ibid., 10.
the Philippines, having “given Saad [al-Ghozi] and Mukhliς a free hand regarding target selection on their impending operations.” Faiz later testified that following the attack al-Ghozi called him from the Philippines with the news that “the job had been done.” Faiz was surprised that in the end local targets like the LRT train station had been bombed, given that part of the funding for the operation, some US$3,600, had come from al-Qaeda.

The Rizal Day attacks demonstrate the blurred lines between local and global jihad in Southeast Asia’s jihadist assemblage. Individuals with ostensibly different interests collaborated with one another. The attack targets, ultimately, were decided by a shifting and highly contingent process of mobilization, informed by tactical and strategic circumstances. Ideologically, the assemblage in its most coherent form drew jihadists together around a broad militant pan-Islamist agenda to confront the enemies of Islam, whoever they were and wherever they might be. In this way, the local and the global scales of conflict were elided into one, Southeast Asian, theatre of operation.

Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia

During the “global war on terror,” the precise nature of al-Qaeda’s ‘links’ to Southeast Asia were a source of much speculation and some confusion. One high-profile case of a foreign fighter in the region centered on the activities of a Spanish militant and leader of an al-Qaeda linked cell, Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkasan, and Parlindungan Siregar, an Indonesian, previously unknown to the authorities, who had been based in Spain. According to court documents produced at the trial of Imad, Siregar facilitated paramilitary training for Imad and members of his cell at a camp near the conflict area of Poso, in Central Sulawesi. Indonesia’s national intelligence agency, BIN, apparently was unaware of the training camp before details of the Spanish cell were aired in the media. But by that time Parlindungan Siregar was nowhere to be found. The

539 Ibid., 10.
agency determined that the camp had probably shut down shortly after the attacks of 9/11.  

The most well-known case of a foreign militant in the region with suspected al-Qaeda connections was that of Omar al Faruq. In September 2002, on the first anniversary of 9/11, the United States issued a global code-orange terrorism alert, the second highest level of elevation in the alert system, based on intelligence from the interrogation of Faruq, a suspected al-Qaeda facilitator who had been based in Indonesia since the late 1990s. Al-Faruq told his interrogators that he had been in communication with senior al-Qaeda figures Abu Zubaydah and Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi, who had instructed him to prepare “a plan to conduct simultaneous car/truck bomb attacks against U.S. embassies in the region to take place” near the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks. The revelations, published in *Time* magazine on the week of the anniversary, led to the temporary closure of US and other Western embassies across Southeast Asia and the cancellation of an event in Jakarta to commemorate the 9/11 attacks.

Like a handful of other foreign fighters, al-Faruq appears to have been attracted to the religious conflict zones that had broken out in Indonesia’s eastern provinces. Al-Faruq was involved in a number of training camps in an apparent effort to coordinate and strengthen the ranks of Muslim militants active in Poso and Ambon. He apparently worked with a Saudi financier called Rashid to run paramilitary training camps, known as the “Special Program”. In 2000 they established one camp in the Hitu peninsula of Ambon, which attracted instructors from the Middle East. According to Ken Conboy, “Between late 2000 and mid-2001, the program was supported by twenty persons, including eight Saudis, four Yemenis, and Algerian and a Pakistani,” but most of them would visit Indonesia on a short-term basis only. In time, Faruq and Rashid helped Jemaah Islamiyah establish training camps on the Moluccan islands of Seram and Buru.

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545 Conboy, *The Second Front*, 103-104.
These separate efforts of transnational collaboration were ad hoc and small-scale, but in the wake of 9/11 they prompted feverish reporting in the media about the rise of al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia. The tone of the initial *Time* report on al-Faruq – the operative with the clearest al-Qaeda credentials – betrays a level of post-9/11 fear and alarmism, combined with a common hierarchical analysis of global jihadism in which al-Qaeda was an expanding and commanding monolith:

In the late 1990s al-Faruq slipped into Indonesia to take control of al-Qaeda's operations in Southeast Asia. Across a belt of territory stretching from Myanmar (formerly Burma) to eastern Indonesia, radical Islam was on the rise, with militants occupying swaths of the region's steamy jungle terrain.\(^{546}\)

Global jihad in Southeast Asia, however, was not the result of al-Qaeda’s expansion into the region in any territorial sense. It was enough that Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda had taken the ideological lead by promoting the doctrine of global jihad against the West to their allies around the world. For al-Qaeda to mount attacks in the region, all that was required was for it to collaborate with a handful of Southeast Asian jihadists who were adept at mobilizing the regional assemblage. These joint efforts typically relied on money from al-Qaeda combined with the local geographical knowledge and logistical capabilities of Jemaah Islamiyah operatives. JI, however, never subordinated itself to al-Qaeda and was never its regional “branch.” According to a Mantiqi I operative who was one of the primary contacts with al-Qaeda, even at the peak of the collaboration, JI maintained its organizational autonomy:

Like a business affiliate, we can ask them for an opinion, but they have no authority over us. We are free. We have our own funds, our own men. We are independent, like Australia and the US. But when it comes to an operation we can join together.\(^{547}\)

Two joint bombing operations, in particular, indicate the sophistication of the collaboration, despite both operations failing. A detailed analysis of the operations illustrates how Southeast Asian jihadists often had to compensate for a lack of local resources by mobilizing disparate inputs and functions from across the regional


\(^{547}\) Interview with senior Mantiqi I member, February 16, 2011.
assemblage. Southeast Asian jihadists conducted bombing operations by drawing on a variety of elements from different countries and territories, not unlike a multinational corporation constructing a transnational production chain for the first time, but with much trial and error.

The first joint operation emerged as a Mantiqi I proposal in mid-1999 in response to Osama bin Laden’s fatwa on global jihad the previous year. JI’s Singaporean wakalah had suggested the idea of hitting US targets in the city-state, and Hambali, liking the idea, sent Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana to Pakistan to seek the support of Khalid Sheikh Muhammad. Before leaving Kuala Lumpur for Karachi, Faiz made a farewell visit to an ailing Abdullah Sungkar, who was in hospital recovering from heart bypass surgery. But Faiz did not mention the plan for an operation with al-Qaeda. As mentioned above, Sungkar appears to have been kept in the dark on the matter, which suggests that Faiz and Hambali were not confident of getting his approval for al-Qaeda attacks in the region. Although Sungkar had been prepared to assist the Bojinka plotters some years earlier, it is likely that, at the least, he would have had grave strategic concerns about conducting mass-casualty global jihadist attacks on targets in Jemaah Islamiyah’s own territory. The 1999 Singapore plot stands as the only al-Qaeda attack planned while Sungkar was still alive.

In Karachi Faiz was unable to contact Khalid Sheikh Muhammad so he ventured into Afghanistan in an attempt to contact someone else in the al-Qaeda leadership. In Kandahar he was able to get an audience with the al-Qaeda military chief Muhammad Atef. He had brought with him a reconnaissance video JI members in Singapore had made of a possible local target: a bus stop at the Yishun Mass Rapid Transit station, which was used to shuttle US personnel working at Sembawang wharf, a logistics base of the US 7th Fleet. In addition, he had prepared a written assessment of the target.

According to Faiz, after studying these materials Muhammad Atef was positive about the operation but said he would need more information on the frequency and number of US personnel and information on the presence of any US warships docking at the wharf. Faiz, for his part, was concerned about who would execute the attack. “I don’t think we

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548 Senior Mantiqi I member, personal communication.
have the suicide bombers,” he told Atef. Atef replied, “We will provide the personnel. The money, we will provide. You need only to look for the explosives, the TNT, and the transport.”

Over a year later, in October 2000, al-Qaeda sent an operative, Bandar (Abu Hazim al-Sha’ir) to Kuala Lumpur. Bandar met with Faiz, who was now able to offer him a full report on the naval base at Sembawang, including photographs of the positions of US warships, information on the procurement of explosives from the Philippines and an analysis of the cost of the operation. But nothing more was done until April the following year when Faiz met the Philippines-based operative and JI bomb-maker Fathur Rahman al-Ghozi in Kuala Lumpur and gave him US$2,500 to procure explosives in the Philippines. Meanwhile, in Karachi KSM was on the cusp of executing the 9/11 attacks but was determined to deploy operatives for other, concurrent operations. He sent Muhammad Monsour Jabarah, a young Canadian of Kuwaiti heritage to Malaysia to facilitate an attack that initially targeted the Israeli or US embassy in the Philippines, but as it developed it merged with the Singapore plot. Jabarah would manage the money for the operation, and act as a guide for, Ahmad Sahagi, a non-English speaking suicide operative. KSM gave him an initial US$10,000; he had at some point also transferred $10,000 to Faiz in Malaysia. Both al-Qaeda operatives had sworn an oath to Osama bin Laden.

Before leaving for Malaysia, Jabarah met with Hambali at his Karachi apartment for further training and preparation specific to operating in Southeast Asia. Hambali gave him his contacts in Kuala Lumpur and advice on where to stay when he arrived. His main contact, he was told, would be Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana, although he would know him only by the alias Mahmoud. According to Hambali’s CIA interrogation, he trained Jabarah along with Bandar and a third operative, Abu Muas’ab al-Hashidi, for two weeks in Karachi in the basics of operating in Singapore undetected. The training

550 Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, interrogation deposition, October 22, 2002, para. 11.
552 Ibid.
included how to read a local telephone book and how to use the Mass Rapid Transit public transport system. He also taught them how they could buy chemicals and components for bomb-making on the open market, and sent them on a practice run to buy such supplies in Karachi.  

Bandar was the first operative deployed to execute the Singapore plot. Hambali sent him off with some ideas for targets based on initial casing conducted by local JI operatives: an oil tanker, the US or Israeli embassy, Western airliners. But he was instructed to do his own further casing and given the freedom to use his own discretion in finalising the target. Hambali instructed him to first make contact with Mahmoud in Kuala Lumpur before moving on to Singapore and to keep all email communications brief.  

Jabarrah left Pakistan for Kuala Lumpur on 10 September 2011. He had heard rumours of a big impending attack and KSM had told him to leave the country before the 11th. Jabarah, as it happened, watched the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon unfold from his hotel room while on a stop-over in Hong Kong. Later, he would remark that he was “happy with the success of operation,” which had inspired him in his Southeast Asian adventure.

In Kuala Lumpur Jabarah and Sahagi made contact with Hambali’s right-hand men, Faiz and Zulkepli. They were told to meet with Fathur Rahman al-Ghozi in the Philippines because al-Ghozi would supply the explosives. In the Philippines al-Ghozi told them that he did not yet have enough explosives for the job and would need more time and money. He had managed to buy 1.2 tons of TNT from a black-market supplier in Cebu, but was looking to acquire a total of 6 tons. Al-Ghozi added that the US embassy in Manila would make a poor target because it was too highly secured. He took Jabarah on a tour of the US and Israeli embassies to illustrate his point, showing just

553 Hambali, Central Intelligence Agency interrogation transcript, 052, para 2.
554 Hambali, CIA interrogation transcript, 052, para 3.
555 Ibid., 7.
how far back from the road the US embassy was positioned. He wanted, he said, to discuss targets with Faiz in Kuala Lumpur.

Not long after the Jabarah and Sahagi’s trip to Manila, the al-Qaeda operatives met with Faiz and other local operatives at a McDonald’s restaurant in Kuala Lumpur. Then, driving around town in a minivan, Faiz concluded they would case targets in Singapore and Jabarah would be put in touch with his brother Fatih, who was based in the city-state. In October, Jabarah, now travelling alone, flew to Singapore where he met Fatih and other local JI members. Al-Ghozi joined them. There they made a casing video of various targets, including the Bank of America, Caltex Oil Company, the US and Israeli embassies. The video was transferred onto Video CD and labelled “Visiting Singapore Sightseeing.”

Al-Ghozi added to the short list of targets the US naval base at Sembawang that had been cased the year before. He gave local JI Fiah member Adnan bin Musa US$5,500 in cash to cover the cost of preparations. Back in Malaysia the operatives reviewed their options. The plan now called for each target to be allocated two tons of TNT which would be mixed with 17 tons of ammonium nitrate purchased locally in Singapore. One option was to fashion the explosives into truck bombs. But they would need much more money to purchase the inputs. Jabarah contacted KSM and asked for an additional $50,000. The Malaysian operatives said they would kick in $15,000.

All the while during the planning phase of the Singapore plot the US had been reacting to the devastation of 9/11. Hambali was present in Kandahar when US air strikes commenced against al-Qaeda targets in Afghanistan; one of those killed was al-Qaeda’s military chief, Muhammad Atef. Hambali had met Atef before he was killed, and Atef advised him that the Singapore operation should be executed quickly. Hambali then left Afghanistan, making his way back to Malaysia. He arrived in the midst of planning for the Singapore plot with the financing, operatives and targets all in place. Al-Ghozi, however, told the group that it would take one and a half years to smuggle all the explosives from the Philippines to Singapore via Indonesia. Hambali replied that

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557 Republic of Singapore, Whitepaper, 27.
558 Ibid., 27.
Muhammad Atef had said that if the explosives were in the Philippines the attack should be executed in the Philippines too, in order that it be carried out quickly. Thus the Singapore operation was cancelled. Hambali instructed that the target location would be, once more, the Philippines, and that if the US and Israeli embassy were too well protected they would just have to find softer targets.\(^{560}\)

Not long after the decision to move the operation to the Philippines, Jabarah received an email from Zulkepli Marzuki with the subject line “Problem”. Faiz had been arrested on a visit to Singapore, along with all the Singapore-based operatives, he reported. Jabarah should get out of Malaysia as soon as he could. Acting on this advice, Jabarah and Sahagi took a bus to Bangkok, where they briefly met Hambali, who had also sought refuge in Thailand as the Special Branch had begun arresting jihadist suspects in Malaysia, following the Singapore arrests. It was early January 2002. Nervous that Jabarah’s alias, Sammy, was circulating in the media, Hambali surmised that the arrested Singaporeans were talking and told Jabarah to get out of the region as quickly as possible. Jabarah took a flight to Dubai and then travelled to Oman where he was arrested by the local authorities and, as a Canadian citizen, handed over to Canadian authorities, who ultimately rendered him to the FBI. Hambali would be arrested over a year later, still hiding out in Thailand.

Despite being a failure that ultimately exposed parts of the Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage to the authorities for the first time, an examination of the Singapore bombing plot illustrates the extent to which global jihadists relied on local operatives and resources. What Southeast Asian jihadists lacked in resources in any one location they sought to gain by cobbling together resources (money, personnel, vulnerable targets, safe havens) from a multiplicity of spaces and places across the region. Financing from outside the region, through their links with al-Qaeda, no doubt influenced target selection and made it easier for Southeast Asian jihadists to conduct attacks. But just as Southeast Asian jihadists were attracted to al-Qaeda as a source of easy cash, al-Qaeda was attracted to Southeast Asia as the location of a loose meta-network of social and material resources that I have been calling a regional assemblage.

\(^{560}\) Ibid., 10.
The Jack Roche operation

It is possible to overstate, as well as to understate, the significance of the fact that Jemaah Islamiyah’s fourth Mantiqi broke outside of the traditional map of Southeast Asia to incorporate Australia. In reality, JI only ever had a small following in Australia, perhaps less than fifty people, and as Nasir Abas points out, it was not yet a fully formed Mantiqi. Abas, Membongkar Jamaah Islamiyah, 120-121. Australia, given its higher wages, had been primarily thought of as a space for fundraising rather than recruitment. Yet the inclusion of Australia is illustrative of the flexible approach to regional geography typical of the fluid island world of Southeast Asian jihadism. The Australian JI community was made up of mostly Indonesian immigrants and headed by the identical Ayub twins, Abdurrahman and Abdurrahim, both of whom had experience in Afghanistan. Crucially, it included a handful of white Western Jemaah Islamiyah members. Although the number of Jemaah Islamiyah in Australia was small their integration within the loose Southeast Asian assemblage gave jihadists what social network analysts call “the strength of weak ties.”

Although the connections to Australia may have been few, for jihadists with access to the regional assemblage they extended their territorial reach and opened a pathway to new resources.

The second failed joint JI-al-Qaeda operation was coordinated by Hambali in 2000 and sought to leverage these weak ties to deploy white operatives in what would have been the first attack involving al-Qaeda in a Western country. In this plan, al-Qaeda and JI specifically sought Caucasian operatives who could be sent to Afghanistan for training and return to Australia, attracting little attention as they formed a cell for bombing operations against US and Israeli interests.

Jack Roche, an Anglo-Australian convert to Islam who had joined JI in the late 1990s, was chosen to lead and form a cell to conduct attacks in Australia. Roche, a student of Indonesian, had already proved himself useful to the group by serving as a translator. In July 2000 Roche was sent by Abdurrahim to take instructions of an unspecified nature.


Sally Neighbour, In the Shadow of Swords: on the trail of terrorism from Afghanistan to Australia (Pymble, N.S.W: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004).
from Hambali in Malaysia. According to Roche, “Hambali’s idea was to set up a cell in Australia that was a lot more committed than the group in general was in Australia.”\textsuperscript{564} This entailed a cell that could be trained to conduct bombings. As he recalls in his notebook in Indonesian, “First: Abdurrahim said there is a task for me with Hambali in Malaysia (a plan from the Afghanistan guys). Second: I met with Hambali and he said the same thing. We also spoke about the possibility of doing something to coincide with the Olympic Games over there this year.”\textsuperscript{565}

From Malaysia Roche flew to Karachi, Pakistan, where he met with Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, who went by the alias Mukhtar, and handed him a letter of introduction written by Hambali. During the discussions with Roche, KSM shifted the plan from targeting the Olympic Games in a singular attack to targeting Israeli interests in Australia with multiple attacks.\textsuperscript{566} Recalling, under oath, his encounter with the man who was at the time planning 9/11, Roche added that KSM was also interested in “American airlines to and from Australia.”\textsuperscript{567}

KSM then sent Roche for military training with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, having written him a letter of introduction addressed to Abu Abdullah, a kunya used at the time by Osama bin Laden. In Afghanistan Roche met briefly with bin Laden, was put through a ten-day course in explosives, and personally instructed in covert surveillance tradecraft by al-Qaeda security chief Saif al-Adel. Meanwhile, Roche describes how senior al-Qaeda figures, including military chief Abu Hafs, discussed and finally set the parameters of the plot. They decided upon two targets, the Israeli embassy in Canberra and a prominent Australian-Israeli businessman in Melbourne. Al-Qaeda, too, was keen to leverage JI’s ability to recruit and deploy Caucasian operatives. “They decided,” Roche writes, “to receive three white Muslim Australians for training in Afghanistan.” Roche himself was made the “coordinator” of the Australian operation.\textsuperscript{568}

\textsuperscript{564} Ibid., 200.
\textsuperscript{566} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{567} District Court of Western Australia, The Queen v Jack Roche, 622 of 2003, 560.
\textsuperscript{568} Roche, “My Notes.”
Roche then returned via Khalid Sheikh Muhammad in Pakistan, who gave him US$3250 and a letter for Hambali about what had been agreed. He then flew to Malaysia where he met with Hambali and received another US$4750 in al-Qaeda money via electronic transfer. Roche then travelled to Indonesia for “cover”, where he prepared for his operation in Australia. “In Indonesia,” he writes, “I shaved my beard so that when I enter Perth, Australia, the immigration there will only see a normal white person!”

In Australia Roche conducted surveillance of the Israeli embassy in Canberra and did some preliminary research on the Jewish businessman. The attacks, however, never went ahead. Jack Roche developed cold feet and sought to extract himself from the plot. Meanwhile, he had met strong resistance from the Ayub twins who ran Mantiqi IV. According to Roche, “They were having problems with coming to grips with the fact that I appeared to be Hambali’s man in Australia whereas they saw me as their man in Australia. They really did want to control the situation.”

Also, both men had decided to settle in Australia and perhaps were not prepared to suffer the consequences of being implicated in an attack in what was for them a safe haven.

According to Roche’s testimony, during the dispute over the Australian operation, the Ayub twins arranged for him to fly to Indonesia to meet Ba’asyir, who they assumed, responding to their complaints, would call off the operation. Instead, Ba’asyir told Roche, without wanting to discuss the details, “Whatever Hambali has tasked you to do, do it.”

On returning to Australia and telling the twins what Ba’asyir had said, Roche says they were “furious”.

After months of pressure from the twins against the operation, Abu Bakar Ba’asyir called Roche and in Roche’s words said, “Look, whatever it is you’re doing, stop it.”

Meanwhile, on four separate occasions Roche attempted to contact the Australian authorities to inform them of the plot, but his calls were never returned. The evidence of

569 Ibid.
570 The Queen v Jack Roche, 520.
571 Interview with Jack Roche, September 26, 2011.
572 Despite the disapproval of other Mantiqi leaders, Hambali’s Mantiqi I colleagues argue that, according to the JI constitution, the assent of the amir gave them all the legitimacy they needed for their out-of-area global jihadist operations. Interview with senior Mantiqi I member, August 23, 2011.
573 Neighbour, Shadow of Swords, 216.
the first JI-al-Qaeda operation in Australia emerged only two years later, after police raids on JI suspects following the Bali bombings of 2002.

The Roche operation demonstrates the geographical reach that the regional assemblage offered al-Qaeda at the turn of the century. Once again, highly mobile and relatively autonomous jihadists planners and operatives—KSM, Hambali, and Roche—collaborating with a foreign organization, al-Qaeda, exploited the assemblage to mobilize attack plans in defiance not just of nation-state borders, but also of JI’s own territorial command structure. The Roche case illustrates how this mobilization process relied not just on hierarchical relationships, but, crucially, also on informal and ad hoc ties created within the assemblage. Technically, Roche in Mantiqi IV was not under the command of Hambali. Indeed, Abdurrahman Ayub, the most senior figure in Mantiqi IV, had spent five years in Afghanistan to Hambali’s two, and had the prestige of having written al-Qaeda’s manual on knife-fighting. Nor was he answerable to al-Qaeda. Nor did he undergo any special indoctrination process by Hambali or KSM in order that he serve them directly. His salafi jihadi ideology was something JI had cultivated in him over the preceding years. He was simply, as he put it, carried away with the opportunity of “actually doing something for Islam in Afghanistan.”

Illustrating his fervor for action before he had even left Australia, Roche wrote a letter to his son in which he made reference to,

The greater sacrifice worthy of the highest reward from Allah that I am about to undertake. As Muslims we are obligated to perform jihad to uphold the laws of Allah…. As we see today, the disbelievers are now out of control and believe that their ways based on inequality, arrogance, et. cetera, are right. I hate them for that and need to learn more about how to combat them.

Roche’s raw enthusiasm for action is precisely the quality that Hambali, waiting for him in Malaysia, looked for in a recruit. Later, asked by his CIA interrogators about the JI recruitment process, Hambali would tell them that JI’s main recruiters, who included Mukhlas and Abu Jibril, sought recruits who demonstrated “enthusiasm and devotion to

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575 The Queen v Jack Roche, 550.
576 Ibid., 625.
Islam.”

Hambali provided a way for such “young guns” to turn their enthusiasm into action. Jack Roche, reflecting on Hambali’s influence, describes him not as charismatic or charming, but as “efficient.” “He was good at organizing,” Roche says. “He got things done.”

If Roche had not ultimately decided to withdraw from the operation it is likely that he would have been able to scrape together sufficient resources to launch some kind of attack in Australia, despite the opposition from the Ayub twins. As the judge in his trial concluded, “If you had not decided that enough was enough then the conspiracy had every chance of successfully being carried out.”

Returning to the debate that introduces this chapter, on the whole JI and al-Qaeda enjoyed a close but ambivalent relationship. Within JI, the notion that global rather than local jihad should take precedence was highly controversial—just as it was within al-Qaeda itself—not to mention within al-Qaeda allies elsewhere in the world, such as Islamic Jihad and Gama’a Islamiyya.

Yet, as we have seen, enterprising jihadists with a fervor for action did not necessarily require ideological uniformity across the assemblage in order to exploit its resources to prepare attacks. Very occasionally, however, opposition from within the assemblage was a decisive factor in preventing an attack. For example, Hambali recounted to his CIA interrogators that at the behest of KSM, he and another JI member, Yazid Sufaat, had cased potential Western tourist targets in Thailand with the help of mujahidin from Thailand’s Malay Muslim deep south. They took video of night clubs in Pattaya and Phuket, and of the popular Western tourist strip in Bangkok, Khao San Road. The video

Better still, he added, if their family was known to the organization. See Hambali, CIA interrogation transcript, no. 057, August 23, 2003, 4.


Ibid., 631.

was then sent back to KSM and al-Qaeda military chief Abu Hafs. But according to Hambali, the plot was abandoned after the Jemaah Salafi leader who had attended Mujahidin League meetings in Malaysia, Muhammad Haji Jaeming, informed him that his group and the leading Salafi preacher in Thailand, Ismael Lutfi Japakia, opposed the attacks on tourists. Thus Hambali informed KSM that “the local Thai mujahidin group would no longer support the attacks” and “the feasibility research had also finished.”

Jemaah Salafi members appear to have taken a stand against global jihadist attacks in Thailand. It is important to note, however, that as a result of their repeated interactions with more radical brethren from neighbouring countries, they did not escape being co-opted into the regional jihadist assemblage. Consequently, Jemaah Salafi members could be mobilized to play a role, perhaps unwittingly, in helping to transfer money from Hambali to Muklas for the 2002 Bali bombings. (For a visualisation of the 2002 Bali operation from a regional assemblage perspective, see figure 2.)

Southeast Asia and 9/11

So useful was the Southeast Asian assemblage to al-Qaeda that it played a central role in the attacks of September 11, reprising the role it had played in the Bojinka plot in the 1990s, only on a larger scale. Although it is not widely appreciated, Southeast Asian jihadists provided significant logistical support for 9/11. As we have seen, it was during Bojinka that Hambali met 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Muhammad and the two developed a close working relationship. The subsequent JI-al-Qaeda relationship hinged much on the trust between these two individuals, who may have connected with each other in part on the basis of similar personality traits. Both appear to have been impatient planners of attacks against the West, often advancing ambitious and risky operations where their colleagues were more cautious. Both were highly geographically mobile operatives who fiercely guarded their operational independence from the organizations to which they were ostensibly loyal. Both served as brokers connecting otherwise separate jihadist organizations and networks. Notably, KSM avoided

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581 Hambali, CIA interrogation transcript, no. 055, August 22, 2003, 2.
582 Badan Reserse Kriminal Polri, Berita Acara Pemeriksaan Wan Min bin Wan Mat, August 2, 2004, 15.
swearing an oath of allegiance to Osama bin Laden until after 9/11, in order that he would be free to plan attacks as he saw fit.\(^583\)

If we treat the history of the 9/11 operation as one beginning with Bojinka in the 1990s, we can see that Southeast Asian jihadists were present at the inception of global jihad and its most devastating attack. In 1996, following the failure of the Bojinka, KSM travelled to Afghanistan to seek the support of bin Laden for a new plot to hijack ten American planes and crash them into targets in the US. At first bin Laden was skeptical of such an ambitious plan. But by March or April of 1999 Khalid Sheikh Muhammad had persuaded him to support his “planes operation.” KSM now had the full support of al-Qaeda.\(^584\) Straightaway bin Laden offered KSM four operatives: Abu Bara and Tawfiq bin Attash, alias Khalid (both Yemeni nationals) and Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Midhar (both Saudi Arabians). The Saudi Arabians were recommended because, at their own initiative, they had already obtained US visas. KSM planned to make up the rest of the operatives from the loyal ranks of Yemenis that constituted bin Laden’s security detail.\(^585\) But it transpired that the first two Yemenis were unable to obtain visas; US authorities were suspicious of young men from Yemen because they considered them high risk prospects for overstaying and joining the illegal workforce. KSM, who was developing the plot as he went, now modified it to work around the problem of the visas. His planes operation would now have two components. The first component was the initial plot to crash airplanes into symbolic targets on the American mainland; it would employ al-Hazmi, al-Midhar and other suitable candidates from Saudi Arabia, as Saudi citizens had no trouble getting US visas. The second component was a scaled-down version of the Bojinka plot, to be staged again in Southeast Asia, employing the Yemeni operatives. US airliners departing from regional capitals – for example, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Hong Kong – would be exploded mid-air, with


bombings timed to be simultaneous with the US mainland attacks in order to heighten the psychological impact.\textsuperscript{586}

Planning for the Southeast Asia component was facilitated by Hambali, with Jemaah Islamiyah operatives playing an even larger supporting role than they did during Bojinka, drawing on their knowledge of the region and ready access to its resources. Perhaps the earliest al-Qaeda operative to be sent to Southeast Asia in the planning phase of 9/11 was the British-raised Indian man, Dhiren Barot (alias Esa al-Hindi). According to the 9/11 Commission report, Barot travelled to Malaysia in late 1999, met with Hambali and passed him the addresses of two people, one in the US and one in South Africa, who he said he could contact if he needed help.\textsuperscript{587} But the operational purpose of Barot’s visit to Malaysia remains unclear. The CIA suspected that the US address, possibly in California, may have been that of an al-Qaeda operative pre-positioned to help the 9/11 hijackers; Hambali, however, claims he did not contact anyone at either address nor pass the addresses on to anyone.\textsuperscript{588}

Not long after Dhiren Barot’s departure Hambali received a message from KSM asking him to assist Khallad and Abu Bara, the Yemenis who were assigned to the Southeast Asian planes operation. Khallad had already planned to visit Malaysia to get a new prosthetic limb from the local Endolite clinic, a branch of an international company specializing in prosthetics. Two years’ earlier he had lost his lower-right leg in combat against the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. He was instructed to use the opportunity to case the security on US airlines operating in the region. Khallad and Abu Bara would be joined in Kuala Lumpur by the two Saudi operatives preselected for the US planes operation, al-Midhar and al-Hazmi.

These two, the first operatives to be deployed to the US for the 9/11 attacks, would travel via Malaysia, using Yemeni documents for the first leg of the trip and their Saudi passports on the second leg into the US mainland, in order to obscure their prior travel

\textsuperscript{586} Ibid.
to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Once again, just as we saw with the fugitive Ramzi Yousef locating himself in the Philippines for the Bojinka plot, the pioneers of global jihad were attracted to Southeast Asia for its perceived geopolitical insignificance. Such perceived insignificance, as we have also seen, relied on the fact that the regional jihadist assemblage was effectively invisible to the authorities.

Khallad and Abu Bara arrived in Kuala Lumpur in mid-December and checked into a hotel near the airport. Hambali met them the following day and brought them to his house in Sungai Manggis and also to the Endolite clinic to order Khallad’s prosthesis. Khallad, also in late December, took a flight on a US airliner to Bangkok and then on to Hong Kong, during which he tested security by smuggling in his carry-on luggage a box-cutter and removing and opening his luggage during the flight. He was noticed by neither airport security nor the flight attendants. He returned to Kuala Lumpur where he was joined on the 4th and 5th of January by al-Hazmi and then al-Midhar. Hambali arranged for the four al-Qaeda operatives to stay at a safe house, a condominium owned by a wealthy businessman and JI member Yazid Sufaat. Unbeknownst to the al-Qaeda and JI operatives who came and went from the safe house, they were under video and photographic surveillance by the Malaysian Special Branch, at the request of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Malaysians would later be mystified as to why the Americans had allowed the hijackers to operate freely in the US. This “intelligence failure” would be highlighted in the 9/11 Commission Report as an example US intelligence agencies’ failure to share information on threats of a transnational scale.

On the 8th of January the operatives went on their separate paths, al-Midhar and al-Hazmi flying via Bangkok to Los Angeles and Khallad and Abu Bara returning to Pakistan. It was a measure of the close alliance between KSM and Hambali that he trusted the latter to host the first operatives deployed for both the 9/11 attacks and the

589 9/11 Commission Report, 158.
590 Ibid., 158-159.
591 Interview with officer, Special Task Force for Operations and Counter-Terrorism, Royal Malaysian Police, February 2011.
Southeast Asia attacks. KSM later described 9/11 as “his dream and life’s work.”

Typically, he had a strict approach to operational security which meant that different operations were kept compartmentalized from one another. But when it came to operations in Southeast Asia, a valuable mobilization space, he appears to have deferred to Hambali’s expertise in the region. “Hambali as a rule had to be informed of the activities of Al Qaeda operatives in Southeast Asia,” KSM would later tell his interrogators.

Despite the success of Khallad’s casing mission, bin Laden intervened to cancel the Southeast Asia operation in April or May 2000, reckoning it would be too difficult to synchronize with the US attacks. But KSM, a feverish planner, had little time for Bin Laden’s emphasis on simplicity. He has said he was “always working on more than one operation at a time.” In late 2000 or early 2001 he sought to supplement the 9/11 plot with a second wave of attacks, which he began preparing in parallel to the first. The concept of the second wave was to employ hijackers who had non-Arab passports to fly planes into US targets from Southeast Asia, in an attempt to circumvent the increased security he anticipated post-9/11. Again, Southeast Asia would be an asset due to its apparent insignificance. Planning, however, lagged behind preparations for the first wave and only three pilots were identified. The first two were Zacarias Moussaoui, a French citizen of Moroccan descent, and Abderraouf Jdey, a Canadian citizen. KSM asked Hambali to find him a third pilot from either Malaysia or Indonesia, and in late 1999 or early 2000 gave him US$ 20,000 to facilitate recruitment and training. Hambali recommended Zaini Zakaria, a Malaysian Jemaah Islamiyah member who had been among the first to begin training with al-Qaeda in 1999, who already possessed a single-engine airplane license.

In mid-2001 Zulkepli Marzuki, the Jemaah Islamiyah Mantiqi I secretary, enrolled Zaini Zakaria in pilot training for wide-body commercial airliners at a flight school in Sydney, in preparation for the second wave attacks.

594 KSM Subst., 8
595 KSM Subst., 9.
596 KSM Subst., 40.
597 9/11 Commission Report, 531n161
598 Interview with Zulkepli Marzuki, February 16, 2011.
Also in mid-2000 KSM sent Zacarias Moussaoui to Southeast Asia to seek help from Jemaah Islamiyah operatives in enrolling in a flight school. Moussaoui met the Mantiqi I treasurer and Hambali confidante Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, who offered Moussaoui his spare room. Moussaoui appeared to be tasked with more than just flight training. That night he asked Faiz if he could help him obtain forty tons of ammonium nitrate. Faiz said he would see what he could do. Later the same night Moussaoui told Faiz that he had once had a dream that he flew a plane and crashed it into the White House. He said he told Osama bin Laden about the dream, and bin Laden had replied, “Go ahead.” Moussaoui then asked if Faiz could help him look for flying lessons. The following day Faiz drove Moussaoui to the Royal Selangor Flying Club, the same club where he had also taken Zaini Zakaria.

Ultimately Moussaoui would find that the cost of flight lessons in Malaysia was prohibitively expensive. He decided to look for a flight school in the US instead, where he understood lessons were cheaper than in Malaysia. Before leaving the country he stayed a few nights in Yazid Sufaat’s condominium, during which he “managed to annoy everyone he came in contact with,” according to Hambali. He criticized JI for “sitting around and reading the Quran instead of conducting operations.” But Hambali considered the operations Moussaoui suggested, such as the kidnapping of a local Chinese businessman or robbing of motorists, ridiculous. Jemaah Islamiyah did, however, purchase ammonium nitrate, assuming that this was a request from KSM. Four tons of the material was purchased and stored on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur on the assumption that four tons, rather than forty, was the request, and that Moussaoui had simply misremembered it. But when Hambali and Faiz were able to reach KSM by telephone they were horrified to discover that he had said nothing to Moussaoui about ammonium nitrate, and that Moussaoui had been sent to Malaysia only for flight training. Hambali complained to KSM that Moussaoui was a troubled character, perhaps mentally disturbed, and that they could not trust him. He demanded KSM get him out of the country. KSM deferred to his Southeast Asian colleague and recalled Moussaoui to

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600 “Substitution for the Testimony of Riduan Isamuddin (‘Hambali’),” Defense Trial Exhibit 946, United States v. Zacarias Moussaoui, July 31, 2006., p. 6 (hereafter Hambali Subst.)
Pakistan. Hambali observes that they were so keen to see the back of Moussaoui they gave him SG$2000 cash for an air ticket after he claimed to have no money of his own.\(^{601}\)

Jemaah Islamiyah was so rankled by the Moussaoui episode that when Mukhlas visited Muhammad later in the year he complained about Moussaoui’s behavior. KSM apparently agreed that “there was something wrong with Moussaoui” and he repaid JI’s money for the ammonium nitrate and the air ticket.\(^{602}\) With Moussaoui back in Pakistan, KSM asked Bin Laden and Muhammad Atef that Moussaoui be pulled from the second wave operation. But the al-Qaeda leaders insisted he remain in the operation and the planning continue as before. Reluctantly, KSM sent Moussaoui for flight training again, this time to the US. Not long afterwards he finally cut ties with Moussaoui after seeing the operative’s lax attitude to operational security, now a risk the entire 9/11 operation.

Moussaoui was arrested by the US authorities in August 2001 for overstaying his visa, after the FBI acted on a tip-off from a suspicious flight instructor at a flight school Moussaoui was attending in Minnesota. The instructor had noticed that Moussaoui became agitated when the subject of religion came up, and when he asked him what religion he belonged to, Moussaoui had raised his voice and said “I am nothing!” Moussaoui, the instructor said, had stood out from the other students by paying for his $8000 training in 100 dollar bills and by not having a persuasive reason for purchasing expensive commercial jet training.\(^{603}\)

By the time KSM learnt of Moussaoui’s arrest the 9/11 attacks had been executed and the second wave was all but shelved. He would tell his interrogators that he had “no idea that the damage of the first attack would be as catastrophic as it was, and he did not plan on the US responding to the attacks as fiercely as they did, which led to the next phase being postponed.”\(^{604}\)

\(^{601}\) Hambali Subst., 7.

\(^{602}\) Hambali Subst., 7.


\(^{604}\) KSM Subst., 39.
He did not completely abandon, however, the possibility of a follow-up planes attack on the US mainland. In the aftermath of 9/11, spurred by a desire to avenge the US invasion of Afghanistan, KSM, in collaboration with Hambali, plotted to attack targets that had been long-listed but not included in the first wave of attacks. These included the tallest building in the US, the Sears building of Chicago; the tallest building in California, the Library Tower in Los Angeles; the White House and an embassy in Washington.\textsuperscript{605}

Hambali, acting on a request from bin Laden and KSM, assembled four Malaysians from the Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, plus a Malaysian pilot Zaini Zakaria, for an attack which they understood to involve hijacking a plane and crashing it into “the tallest building in California,” the Library Tower. In late 2001, three team members travelled to Kabul and met with Bin Laden and swore allegiance to him.\textsuperscript{606} According to Hambali, KSM appointed Masran bin Arsyad, a Malaysian student studying in Pakistan, as leader of the cell and read to him the operational plans. Hambali claims that KSM did not tell him any details of the plot, only that “the operation involved hijacking an airplane.”\textsuperscript{607} Following the US invasion of Afghanistan the team fled to Pakistan and then made their way back to Southeast Asia. The Library Tower plot ultimately failed, but only due to a series of fortuitous events. In January 2002 the cell leader, Masran bin Arsyad, was detained at Colombo airport, Sri Lanka, for not declaring a large sum of money in his possession—US$ 50,000 in cash, which al-Qaeda had given him for the operation. He confessed to the planes operation under interrogation in Malaysia. Zaini Zakaria voluntarily turned himself in to the Malaysian police.\textsuperscript{608} Finally, the two men tapped as “muscle” for the operation, who would have been tasked to control the hostages, Lillie and Zubair, were arrested while in hiding with Hambali in Thailand in August 2003. All three were rendered into US custody and remain in Guantanamo Bay prison.

\textsuperscript{605} KSM Subst., 41.
\textsuperscript{607} Hambali, CIA interrogation transcript, no. 068, August 26, 2003.
\textsuperscript{608} Interview with officer, Special Task Force for Operations and Counter-Terrorism, Royal Malaysian Police, December 6, 2010.
Conclusion
Jihadist mobilization at the regional scale—cross-cutting local-versus-global, organizational, and nation-state boundaries—reached its peak in Southeast Asia at the turn of the century. The plots I have examined in this chapter, although understandably less well known than the Bali bombings of 2002, illustrate the under-recognized capacity of relatively small numbers of jihadists to mobilize people and materials across Southeast Asia’s jihadist assemblage. From a threat perspective, understanding the ad hoc mobilization of jihadists within an assemblage context is more important than understanding the operation of leading figures and formal organizations in isolation. As we have seen, despite the historical focus of JI and MILF on their local goals in Indonesia and the Philippines respectively, entrepreneurial jihadists were able to exploit the Southeast Asian assemblage for their own violent agendas.

The significance of regional jihad has been overlooked in the debate on global versus local factors. It may be more convenient to think in terms of hierarchical organizations with clear labels, formal structures, and explicit ideological positions. The reality of jihadist mobilization, however, was complex, ad hoc, and boundary-defying. In this wild ecosystem even the jihadists themselves were not always informed as to how attacks were being prepared. Jihadists suffered from problems of imperfect information brought on by compartmentalization, need-to-know secrecy, and the communication and logistical challenges of operating across a loose, distributed assemblage.

Translated to a social network analysis map, the Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage would no doubt prove cumbersome to visualize, appearing as a large and unwieldy socio-material network of networks. Yet a regional assemblage approach is necessary if we are to understand why a part of the world such as Southeast Asia—relatively remote and peaceful, and at the periphery of the Muslim world—became so central to the development of 9/11 and the tactic of using commercial planes as missiles, a tactic that will forever be the symbol of the rise of global jihad.
Figure 2: Although planning and execution of the 2002 Bali bombings centred on Indonesia, the operation relied on mobilizing resources from across the regional jihadist assemblage.
Until the regional crackdown on terrorism that followed 9/11 and the 2002 Bali bombings, a key enabling condition of the Southeast Asian jihadist assemblage was its invisibility. The central organisation of the assemblage, Jemaah Islamiyah, was active across five countries, connecting jihadists from the Philippines to Australia and almost everywhere in between. Separately, and to varying extents, security agencies in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines were aware of the existence of militants in their midst. But, confined to their discrete jurisdictions, not only had they failed to see how their pieces of the jigsaw joined with the pieces from neighbouring countries, they were not aware of the existence of a jigsaw in the first place.

The existence of a transnational jihadist threat in the region appears to have been discovered only after intervention from the Central Intelligence Agency. It was as a result of the CIA’s request to the Malaysian Special Branch to conduct surveillance on the first two 9/11 hijackers in Kuala Lumpur in January 2000 that the Malaysian authorities discovered that the al-Qaeda operatives were being hosted by a local militant network involving radical preachers from Indonesia. But even then, the Jemaah Islamiyah network’s reach across the region was fully appreciated only after a series of arrests were made in Singapore in late 2001, following the discovery by US forces of the surveillance video of Singapore targets amid the rubble of the home of al-Qaeda military chief Muhammad Atef in Afghanistan, which had been hit by a US airstrike, killing Atef.

These exposures notwithstanding, amid the deceit and controversy surrounding George W. Bush’s War on Terror and the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, it became fashionable in certain circles in Southeast Asia to say that Jemaah Islamiyah was the creation of a dark conspiracy to discredit Islam and that in a real sense JI “does not exist.” This conspiracy

609 Interview with senior officer, Counter-Terrorism Task Force, Royal Malaysian Police, February 18, 2011.

theory had particular traction in Indonesia given the Suharto regime’s history of manipulating the spectre of militant Islam for political purposes in the 1970s and 1980s. An effort to debunk the conspiracy theory, however, came from a highly qualified source that was frustrated by the public denialism: Jemaah Islamiyah itself. In a rather formal and solicitous “Official Statement of Al Jamaah Al Islamiyah,” released to the Indonesian media on October 6, 2003, a writer using the pseudonym Ustadz Mu’min Mulia sought to answer the “puzzle and the questions” of the Muslim community. “We would like to take this opportunity,” the statement begins, “to openly and officially state the following: Al Jamaah Al Islamiyah indeed exists….” The statement continues:

The issue of terrorists, talked up by infidel America and its allies … directed at Al Jamaah Al Islamiyah especially and at Mujahidin in other parts of the world generally, is an effort by them to distance us from the body of the Muslim community, to arrest, to imprison, and to kill us.611

But the more Muslims came to understand Jemaah Islamiyah, the more they repudiated it. JI’s attacks on civilians, in particular, were met with popular backlash. Recognised as a threat by both the public and the authorities, jihadists now found it increasingly difficult to mobilize across a weakened and disassembling regional assemblage. In this context, rogue Malaysian Jemaah Islamiyah bomber Noordin Muhammad Top, constantly on the run from the police, saw his dream of becoming an official al-Qaeda affiliate go unfulfilled. But what emerged from this more restrictive regional security climate was not a return to early Darul Islam-style agrarian insularity. Rather, I describe the less extensive mobilization of this period, in which actors were more reliant on local places but still enjoyed cross-border access to resources—sometimes material, sometimes only symbolic—as translocal jihad. By “translocal” I seek to capture jihadist mobility and exchange at both the transnational and the subnational, local-to-local, scale.612 Translocal jihad, finally, covers a hybrid form of Southeast Asian jihadism that prioritises the acquisition of local territory by militants who engage with global jihadist ideas and images originating from foreign groups such as al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State.


The Decline of Regional Jihad

Following the Bali bombings of 2002 the security climate in Southeast Asia changed rapidly. Counter-terrorism agencies began to catch up to jihadists’ ability to operate transnationally and regionally.\textsuperscript{613} Indonesian and Malaysian police, in collaboration with other agencies, kept militants under pressure and on the run. Jihadists in Southeast Asia no longer enjoyed the geographical flexibility they once had to operate across the region. In addition, global jihadist ideology faced a backlash from within jihadist circles. The mainstream of organizations such as JI considered mass-casualty attacks counterproductive to the cause, and only encouraging a crackdown that would make organizing even harder.\textsuperscript{614} For both these reasons the jihadist assemblage of the preceding years underwent a process of disassembling, rendering mobilization at the regional scale more difficult. In Malaysia, a security crackdown employing a strict regime of detention without trial under the Internal Security Act closed down the Malacca hinterland as a safe haven to Jemaah Islamiyah. In Singapore, the regime, also employing a draconian Internal Security Act, was harsher still, in an effort to harden the city-state against potential terrorist attacks. As an instructive example, the former Jemaah Islamiyah Singapore wakalah chief, Haji Ibrahim bin Haji Maimin—sometimes described as the “spiritual leader” of JI in Singapore—was detained and has remained in indefinite detention ever since, apparently unmoved by government pressure to “deradicalize.”\textsuperscript{615} Counter-terrorism operations in Australia meant that country was no longer viable for JI fundraising. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the JI heartland, all the senior members became hunted by the police. And while travel to Afghanistan-Pakistan was still possible, the capture of Hambali in Thailand and Khalid Sheikh Muhammad in Pakistan, both in 2003, had removed the strongest personal link to al-Qaeda.

In this period, the baton of global jihad was carried forward by a small number of JI or former JI members, many of whom shared in common the fact that they were former

\textsuperscript{613} For an account of Australian-Indonesian cooperation on the Bali bombing investigation, see Greg Barton, Indonesia’s Struggle, Jemaah Islamiyah and the Soul of Islam (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2004), chap. 1.


acolytes of Hambali. Foremost among these men was Noordin Mohammad Top, a Malaysian JI member who had been director of the Lukmanul Hakiem school in Johor Bahru. Almost all al-Qaeda-style attacks in Indonesia since the capture of Hambali in 2003 were carried out by the JI splinter group led by Noordin, consisting of an ad-hoc membership that was formed by recruiting from within the jihadist assemblage.

Noordin followed Hambali’s example of mobilizing resources for jihad from a multiplicity of spaces and networks. Organizationally, however, he sought to out-do Hambali by gaining formal recognition from al-Qaeda as a Southeast Asian affiliate. Noordin’s efforts to identify with al-Qaeda are reflected in the series of name changes that his group underwent as he sought to establish its global jihadist credentials, beginning with “Thoifah Muqatilah” (Fighting Group) in 2004, alighting on “Tandzim Qaedaatul-Jihad untuk Gugusan Melayu” (Al-Qaeda in the Malay Archipelago) in 2005 and concluding with “Al-Qaeda Asia Tenggara” (Al-Qaeda Southeast Asia) in 2009.

Noordin would spend six years on the run in Southeast Asia. According to one insider account, his ability to evade capture for so long was due to his recruitment of “cadre who were still clean” and thus not already on the police radar.616 In his early years on the run he replicated much of the success Hambali had in harnessing resources for jihad on a region-wide scale. But as the manhunt drew on he become more and more isolated within the borders of Indonesia.

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Noordin strikes
The first attack by the Noordin group was the bombing of the J.W Mariott hotel in Jakarta on August 5, 2003. Coming just before the arrest of Hambali in Thailand later in the month, the Marriott attack appeared to confirm to the world Southeast Asia’s problem with militant Islamism was entrenched. The attack on the Marriott hotel had its genesis in a call by Toni Togar, the head of JI in Medan, North Sumatra, to Noordin Top, who was hiding out in Bukittinggi in neighbouring West Sumatra. Togar wanted to dispose of explosives leftover from the Christmas 2000 bombings, fearful that possession of them could lead to him being arrested in the post-Bali crackdown.617

616 Abu Jaisy Al Ghareeb “Kebangkitan Jihad,” 10
Noordin, however, thought the explosives could be put to more productive use and it was the availability of these resources that set the Marriott plot in motion. During the planning phase of the Marriott attack Noordin met with and sought guidance from senior JI leaders Abu Dujana and Adung (then acting Amir) but refused to be controlled by them, styling himself as the “real JI” or, variously, head of its military wing. According to Sidney Jones, following the Marriott bombing, “As senior JI figures distanced themselves from the attack, he moved toward a separate identity, and by early 2004, his group was known to others in the jihadi network as ‘Thoifah Muqatilah’, roughly translated as ‘fighting group’.”

The preparation phase of the Marriott attack illustrates how jihadists in the region adapted to the tighter security climate. Perhaps more than before, they found they could still mount an attack in a major centre like Jakarta if they operated out of smaller, relatively isolated towns and cities and other border zones where scrutiny was less intense. Thus from Bukittinggi, Noordin, now joined by Azhari and Noordin’s brother-in-law, moved further south on Sumatra to the city of Bengkulu where they would plan the Marriott attack among a small group of JI members who lived there. Most operatives for the attack would be Sumatra-based JI members, included the suicide bomber, Asmar Latin Sani, who they met in Bengkulu.

Yet funding for the Marriott attack illustrates that regional and transnational resource mobilization was still possible during the War on Terror. One source of funding, like most of the operatives themselves, came from Sumatra itself. In May Togar robbed a bank in Medan of 113 million rupiah, shooting dead three bank staff in the process. In another small town he robbed a money changer. The other source was al-Qaeda contacts based in Karachi. The Karachi contacts donated US$ 30,000 through Hambali and his son, Rusman Gunawan, also known as Gun Gun. Most of this money was used for the renting of a safe house in Jakarta and the purchase of a vehicle. In his interrogation by CIA officers, Hambali explained how he used Malaysian couriers, one of whom was Lillie (a Malaysian involved in a 2nd wave planes operation) to courier the $30,000 to

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618 Ibid.
Noordin Top. Lille couriered the money into Thailand’s deep south where he met Johan, a courier from Malaysia, in the border town of Hat Yai. Johan would often travel to Hat Yai to pick up money for operations—or in one interesting case, $15,000 to be distributed to the families of the militants who had been involved in the Bali bombings. Despite the stricter security environment, undergoverned border zones were still an asset to regional jihadists.

Another undergoverned space that would play a role in the Marriott attack was the Sumatran province of Lampung. Lampung, only a short boat ride from West Java is an outer island transmigration zone that had been an area of Darul Islam activity since the Suharto era. There Noordin assembled his team for the execution of the attack. Head of the operation would be Noordin Top himself. He designated the Bali bomber and former university lecturer Azhari Hussein as his field commander. Two more junior men, Islam and Asmar Latin Sani would be responsible for getting the explosives to Jakarta, acquiring a car and renting the safe house. Additionally, Asmar had agreed to be the martyr.

According to an International Crisis Group report on the Noordin network, after the planning was completed in Lampung, all four operatives, including Noordin Top, relocated to Jakarta and began reconnaissance to select a target. After considering a branch of Citibank, and two of Jakarta’s most elite high schools, Jakarta International School and Australian International School, the J.W Marriott hotel was selected due to it being an American brand name and the ease with which it could be accessed. Security consultant Ken Conboy observes, the JW Marriott was one of the few luxury hotels in Jakarta that had a busy and visible café near its lobby. The bombing of the Marriott was executed on August 5, 2003. A blue Toyota Kijang, laden with explosives, was driven into the taxi rank area of the hotel. After briefly speaking with a security guard, Asmar detonated the bomb, killing twelve people and injuring one hundred and fifty, most of whom were Indonesian drivers or chauffeurs. Asmar’s severed head was

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621 Hambali, CIA interrogation transcript, 002, 2
623 Ibid.
found amid the shattered window glass on the fifth floor of the hotel, helping investigators to identify the group responsible.624

The regional jihadist assemblage may have been disrupted, but Noordin proved that a small but skilled and mobile group of individuals could continue to aggregate enough resources to mount attacks, at least in Indonesia. Moreover, his personal charisma, a quality not possessed by Hambali, appeared to allow him to recruit a ready supply of suicide bombers.

**Australian Embassy Bombing.**

The Australian Embassy Bombing, Noordin’s next attack, illustrated his ability to transcend Jemaah Islamiyah to tap into Indonesia’s Darul Islam network to form an ad hoc group of operatives. Notably, he drew manpower from the West Javanese militant group known as Ring Banten, a Darul Islam splinter group led by Kang Jaja, who had parted ways with the Darul Islam mainstream in mid-2000 on the basis that it had been too passive towards the conflict in Ambon.625 Ring Banten members had also taken part in an attack on the Atrium Mall in Jakarta in 2001 and the 2002 Bali bombings.

The Australian embassy bombing relied on Noordin’s collaboration with the leader of Kang Jaja’s training camp in Gunung Batu in West Java, Iwan Darmawan, alias Rois. Ken Conboy describes the partnership as the perfect match. “Rois had on hand a band of jihadis from Ring Banten that were in search of a jihad. Noordin, by contrast, was fixated on his anti-Western crusade, but was in need of foot soldiers and a local support network.”626 Apparently, shortly after Rois had met with Noordin and been found suitable for collaboration on an attack against the West, Rois established a new training camp West Java at Gunung Peti in part for the purpose of selecting suicide bombers. One of the trainees was a Ring Banten member, Heri Golun, who would eventually be chosen as the suicide operative for the embassy attack.

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626 Ibid., 228.
Much of the preparation for the embassy bombing took place in August, 2004, with Rois taking Heri Golun out of training in West Java and bringing him to Jakarta to meet Noordin and Azhari. A white Daihatsu box van was purchased as the vehicle to deliver the bomb. By one account Azhari relied on boxes of dynamite that had been sourced from a JI contact who had it left over from the conflict in Ambon. This was combined with potassium chlorate and sulfur bought from a chemical supply store. Eventually, Noordin and Azhari had Heri join them in a safe house so they could indoctrinate him more intensively for his martyrdom. Rois, meanwhile, began to teach him how to drive. On September 9, 2004, Heri Golun drove past the Australian Embassy in the diplomatic suburb of Kuningan and detonated a bomb. He was 26, with a wife who was nine months pregnant. Ten people were killed and 180 were injured in the blast. After a few days, Noordin, Azhari and their accomplices slipped away to a safe house in West Java.

The Australian Embassy attack demonstrated that Southeast Asian jihadists were not dependent on funding from al-Qaeda. Noordin appears to have been able to compensate for his restricted movement at the transnational scale by increasing his mobilization of resources at the local scale. The combination of a focus on local resource mobilization and a more explicit global jihadist ideology would characterise the shift to translocal jihad. Translocalism, a concept parallel to transnationalism, denotes the space that is produced by the creation of local-to-local connections across and between different places, whether these connections occur across nation-state borders or within the one country. Noordin and Azhari’s embassy attack, as a report by the International Crisis Group emphasized, relied upon creating bridges between three distinct networks and localities, namely JI’s East Java division, headquartered in Surabaya; JI’s school and alumni network, centred on Solo in Central Java; and Ring Banten, the Darul Islam offshoot found in West Java. Each locality furnished Noordin with a different resource. In Solo, access to a place that represents the primary social hub of Indonesia’s jihadist network; in Banten, an uneducated, pliable suicide operative from a trusted social network; in East Java, reliable accomplices. It was his ability to aggregate and mobilize disparate resources from across these three spaces that made Noordin’s operation possible.

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627 Ibid., 229.
628 ICG, “Noordin’s Networks”.

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Only with the Australian Embassy bombing did it become clear that Noordin led an autonomous JI splinter group. Although now alienated from the JI leadership, his isolation, both locally and internationally, opened an opportunity to cultivate a hybrid identity that fused al-Qaeda branding and ideology with local resource mobilization. In this way, he sought to position himself as the representative of al-Qaeda in the region, even if his operations did not rely on al-Qaeda support. According to Peter Mandaville, translocality, marked by mobility across space and time, tends to lead to a hybridized identity as actors become influenced by multiple geographic spaces and scales. This process, Mandaville argues, poses a challenge to the nation-state model, a model which is under threat from a number of ‘distanciating’ processes which disembled peoples and cultures from particular territorial locales and spread their social relations across space and time. As a result, political identities no longer inhabit the exclusive container of the nation-state and must be seen as configured in and between multiple political spaces – a condition I termed translocality.\(^{629}\)

The clearest evidence of Noordin’s affinity with al-Qaeda came in late 2005 when he established a website, www.anshar.net, to publicize his group and to publish translated jihadist material from al-Qaeda. There for the first time Noordin drew on al-Qaeda as a symbolic resource, referring to his group as “Al-Qaeda for the Malay Archipelago” (Tanzim Qaedatul-Jihad untuk Gugusan Melayu). The name reflected not only Noordin’s hopes for recognition by al-Qaeda, but also the regional scope of his aspirations as a jihadist who had emerged not from inland Java but from the Malacca hinterland, located at the centre of archipelagic Southeast Asia. Reference to the “Malay Archipelago” recalled Jemaah Islamiyah’s alliances with jihadists across the region and the attempts to unite them under the banner of the Mujahidin League.

If Noordin had been able to succeeded in creating an archipelagic al-Qaeda-style organisation it would have institutionalised the regional approach to global jihadism that Hambali had pioneered before him. Noordin, even more explicitly than Hambali,

\(^{629}\) Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (London: Routledge, 2001), 188.
sought to ground his contribution to global jihad at a regional scale. As the ICG saw it, “Noordin clearly aspires to head a tightly organised military machine with cells across South East Asia, designed to mount terror attacks on the U.S. and its allies, *kafirs*, anti-Islamic governments including Indonesia, and other enemies of Islam.”\(^{630}\) Noordin, however, was a long way from being able to form any such machine. A fugitive on the run in Indonesia with his bomb-maker accomplice, Azhari Husein, he was much less regionally mobile than Hambali had been. Trapped in a restricted geographical space their regional jihad came to express itself in the borderless realm of cyberspace. Yet, while they were at large Noordin and Azhari were still dangerous. Not long after the emergence of the anshar.net website, on October 1, 2005, three Noordin recruits, Salik Firdaus, Misno and Aip Hidayat walked into three different cafes in Bali and exploded backpack bombs, killing themselves and twenty others and injuring around one hundred and fifty bystanders.

Following the Bali II operation a post-bombing analysis emerged that had been written by the perpetrators themselves. “The Bali Project” describes the group’s choice of tactics, bomb-making materials and other preparations. The analysis demonstrates how the attack was prepared by marshalling operatives from a number of sources, of both Darul Islam and Jemaah Islamiyah provenance. Just as in the first Bali bombing, the attack relied on suicide operatives recruited from the Darul Islam network. Salik Firdaus, perhaps the lead suicide bomber in the Bali II attack and the operative who had, in turn, recruited the other two bombers, hailed from an old Darul Islam family.\(^{631}\)

Although the Bali II attack had been both prepared and executed in one country, Indonesia, it was nevertheless a translocal phenomenon. It relied on the cold analytical and organisational skills of Noordin and Azhari, both Malaysian university lecturers; mobilized suicide operatives from West Java; expressed global jihadist ideology in attacking “soft” Western targets in Bali, and in its accompanying propaganda, drew on the rich symbolic power of al-Qaeda, in particular that of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Following the bombing, video footage was found showing a masked

\(^{630}\) ICG, “Noordin’s Networks,” 19.

Noordin lecturing the US and Australia for their perceived crimes and threatening retaliation. Other footage showed the three suicide bombers making their final, pre-mortem statements to the camera. 632

Not long after Bali II Indonesian police caught up with Azhari and an accomplice in their safe house in the resort town of Batu, near Malang in East Java. After a brief shootout in which Azhari was shot and killed, his accomplice, Agus Puryanto, a Darul Islam member, blew himself up before he could be arrested. In the evidence collected from the Batu safe house was the “Bali Project” document, apparently written as a kind of jihadist text book by Azhari. Azhari opens the analysis with the question, “Why Bali?” Answer: “Because attacks against them in Bali are attacks with an impact that is global. Bali is famous throughout the world, indeed its more well-known than Indonesia.” He continues, situating the Bali attack within a global jihadist narrative:

It cannot be denied anymore that the main enemy of Islam is America and its allies. America and its allies attack Islam on a global scale, in every corner of the world. In Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya, Kashmir and the Philippines. They bring financial and technical support to apostate rulers in order to capture mujahidin in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan and Indonesia. Thus they too are attacked throughout the world. Just recently, in July 2005 they were attacked in London. Now they are attacked in Bali again. 633

As a translocal space in itself, Bali connected Noordin’s group to the global jihad against the West. As Azhari says, again in answer to the question of Why Bali?, “As understood by [Jakarta police chief] Inspector General Firman Gani, terrorists only target two primary places in Indonesia, that is, Bali and Jakarta, because it is easier to make a psychological impact on the world.” 634

Following the rapid police tracing and killing of Azhari and the dismantling of the Bali II group there was a lull of four years before the next global jihadist attack in Southeast Asia. As Ward points out, while Bali II may have been intended to demonstrate the militants’ power in that it was the second such attack on a now fortified Bali, in reality

632 Ibid., 1.
634 Ibid.
counterterrorism police had the upper hand and were able to keep Noordin and his associates on the run in Indonesia so much so that they were unable to execute further attacks.635

But despite perhaps the largest manhunt in Indonesian history Noordin remained at large, his prestige in militant circles growing the longer he was able to elude the authorities. It was later discovered that he had been living for much of the time in Cilicap, on the remote south coast of Central Java, where he had married a daughter of the JI member who had been protecting him. Meanwhile, Solahudin observes, from around 2007 the merits of direct attacks to weaken the enemy, qital nikaya, were “hotly debated” in jihadist circles in Indonesia. The debate was heavily influenced by the dissemination of the views of Jordanian jihadist scholar Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who argued that direct attacks against the enemy were permissible, but often undesirable in that they did not contribute to lasting change. Instead, he advocated fighting to seize territory, qital tamkin. The consensus in jihadist circles thus moved away from Noordin and his ad hoc cells of jihadists, further isolating him.636

2009 Jakarta Hotel Bombings

At a time when it seemed Noordin’s network had fallen into irrelevancy, without warning, on July 17, 2009, bombs exploded near-simultaneously in the J.W. Marriot and Ritz-Carlton hotels in Jakarta, killing nine people and injuring fifty. The attack appeared to target a high-level business meeting, and a number of a prominent expatriate businessmen were killed. In August Noordin Top released a statement dedicating the attack to his fallen comrade Jabir and writing, “I will never surrender before America along with its allies leaves Iraq or other Islamic countries.”637 Noordin signed the statement “Amir of Al-Qaeda Indonesia,” indicating his restricted mobility with a new al-Qaeda brand, rescaled from the regional to the national level.

635 Ward, “Suicide Bombings In Indonesia,” 2012.
636 Solahudin, The Roots of Terrorism in Indonesia, 197-198.
The bombings appeared to have been coordinated with another plot, thwarted by police, which also suggested Noordin’s years restricted to Indonesia had shrunk the scale of his thinking. The plot sought to attack the residence of Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, indicating a shift in targeting from the “far enemy” to the “near enemy.”

Yet Noordin had not given up on his vision on an Al-Qaeda affiliate in Southeast Asia, with himself as the head. Leading up to the attack, Noordin was in contact with Muhammad Jibriel, a well-known jihadi publisher and former student of Noordin’s in Malaysia. In 2010 Jibriel was convicted for withholding information relating to the 2009 hotel bombings. It appears that he had made an unsuccessful trip to Saudi Arabia, where his brother was studying, in order to raise funds for Noordin. Correspondence between Jibriel and his brother was found on Jibriel’s computer, referring to a conversation of his with Noordin in which the later asked him to contact “Ubaid AQ Asia” because he was in the process of forming al-Qaeda Asia.638 “Ubaid” was perhaps a reference to Abu Ubaidah, a Malaysian who operated across the border in Southern Thailand, who liked to refer to himself on his blog as “First General of al-Qaeda, Southeast Asia Branch.”639 Abu Ubaidah was an alias of Mohamad Fadzullah Abdul Razak, a student in the same faculty as Azhari at Universitas Teknologi Malaysia, the university where Azhari first came to know Noordin.640 Around the same time Jibriel also appears to have been in contact with al-Qaeda figures in Pakistan, as well as Imam Samudra, the imprisoned Bali Bomber, both perhaps in an attempt to raise financing for Noordin.641

In the wake of the hotel bombings Noordin was finally tracked to a safe house in Solo, Central Java, where, after a dramatic televised siege, he was killed by counterterrorism police on September 17, 2009. Although he had been the region’s most wanted terrorist for six years, he never did receive the recognition from al-Qaeda that he was so

639 http://pintusyurgadipattani.blogspot.com/
641 Muhammad Jibriel, notes on trial evidence, 2010. See also Jones, “Noordin Top’s Group.”
desperate for. Noordin was thus a translocal jihadist whose regional-scale ambitions went largely unfulfilled.

This is not to say that al-Qaeda had completely ignored its Southeast Asian brethren. In late November 2008, al-Qaeda deputy Ayman Zawahiri issued an audio statement titled “The Martyrdom of the Heroes and the Betrayal of the Rulers,” in which he eulogized the 2002 Bali bombers Amrozi bin Nurhasyim, Ali Ghurof (alias Mukhlas) and Imam Samudra, who had been executed by Indonesian authorities earlier that month. In the recording, which features excerpts of interviews with the Bali bombers, Zawahiri addresses Indonesian Muslims directly, saying that jihad is now an individual duty for all Muslims to rid their lands of Western enemies.642

The Aceh Camp
Following the death of Noordin it was reasonable to argue that the last remaining terrorist threat to Western interests in Southeast Asia had been eliminated. Nevertheless, the spectre of al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia rose yet again on February 22, 2010, after police discovered well-funded jihadist training camp operating in the jungle of Indonesia’s Aceh province. The camp was the project of an alliance that included former JI splinter group, Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid, under the leadership of Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, along with members of Darul Islam and other groups. Some 120 militants led by the fugitive 2002 Bali bomber Dulmatin, gathered under the banner of al-Qaeda on Mecca’s Veranda (al-Qaeda Serambi Mekkah; ‘Serambi Mekkah’ is a common metonym for Aceh). A video made by the group for fundraising purposes featured a black flag emblazoned with the Muslim profession of faith and the seal of Muhammad, the same flag flown al-Qaeda affiliates in Iraq and Somalia. But according to one member of the group, the use of the al-Qaeda name “was in recognition of Bin Laden’s leadership of the global jihad rather than anything more concrete”.643

Just as in Poso, the primary purpose of the camp was to establish a secure base (qoidah aminah) from which an Islamic state could be formed, in accordance with the

increasingly fashionable strategy of *qital tamkin*. And if Poso provided an impenetrable and remote jungle with a “backdoor” to an ungoverned border zone (the Malay-Indonesia-Philippines tri-border), so did Aceh, with its proximity to the insurgency in Southern Thailand, just across the Malacca Strait. Solahudin observes that such favourable political geography was a major attraction for the jihadists:

Aceh’s geography was conducive to a guerrilla campaign. The terrain was hilly and covered by tropical forest, with rivers flowing in the valleys, providing a perfect place of refuge. GAM [Free Aceh Movement] itself had waged a long guerrilla war without ever being defeated by the Indonesian military. Aceh was also located close to Southern Thailand meaning it would be easy to forge relations with the Patani mujahideen, to gain weapons and cooperate in each other’s jihad struggle.  

The Aceh training camp neatly illustrated the extent to which Indonesian jihadism had, over the course of time, become globalised. A wholly Indonesian project to establish local territory in Aceh was expressed in the idiom of al-Qaeda’s global jihad. Only twenty years prior, such a local jihadist project might have been framed only in reference to the Islamic State of Indonesia and the spirit of S.M. Kartosoewirjo. In fact, just over twenty years before, in 1989, a Darul Islam splinter group led by Nur Hidayat had done just that. Radicalised by New Order repression and feelings of being abandoned by Abdullah Sungkar after the latter’s emigration to Malaysia, the group of young men sought to establish territory centred on a pesantren in Talangsari, Lampung in Sumatera. The group appointed the leader of the pesantren, Warsidi, an old Darul Islam fighter, as its imam. Warsidi was motivated by a desire to form what we could call a “safe base.” According to a memoir of one of the project participants, he and his friends, who were fired by a desire to wage armed jihad against Suharto, still agreed with Warsidi on the need to first create a safe area:

For Warsidi, forming an area for emigration [*hijrah*] as a sterile area in which to apply syari’ah Islam in daily life was an important thing. “Even if only as wide as the house we live in, the DI [Darul Islam (Abode of Islam)] is what we establish,” said Warsidi. We also agreed with Warsidi about the need for *hijrah* first [before jihad]. Even more so after seeing the Cihideung and Mount Balak area, we viewed it as a strategic place for

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basic military training for the people we would prepare as a suicide squad to attack military targets or vital symbols of the state.\textsuperscript{645}

Warsidi’s project would end in a bloody confrontation with the Indonesian military, in which dozens of Muslim youth were killed by heavily armed troops. After the 1984 Tanjung Prior massacre, the incident at Talangsari would further entrench the Suharto regime’s reputation for the violent repression of Muslims and surely served as a reminder to Abdullah Sungkar, ensconced in Malaysia, of the need for strategic patience.\textsuperscript{646}

The difference between the Talangsari camp and the Aceh camp is twenty years of globalisation facilitating what Kathryn Brickell and Ayona Datta refer to as the “translocal imagination”\textsuperscript{647} By appropriating al-Qaeda branding, the Aceh camp jihadists—rooted firmly, secretly in a small patch of jungle—imagined themselves in a part of a global jihad, even if they enjoyed no direct personal links to al-Qaeda. Perhaps not surprising then that the Indonesian police believed the group had been training for a “Mumbai-style” attack on Jakarta—a reference to the 2008 attack by Lashkar-e-Taiba jihadists in India, starting at the Taj Hotel in Mumbai, in which 164 people were killed.\textsuperscript{648} Thus even more so than Noordin Top in his later years, the Aceh jihadists’ groundedness and isolation was informed by a global connectedness made possible by the diffusion of global jihadist ideas and images via electronic communications technology, especially the internet. The result was a base that merged the local and the global into a translocal space of jihad.

ISIS

The rise of the Islamic State movement, or ISIS, in Southeast Asia, can be seen as continuing the pattern of translocalism produced by the jihadist turn towards establishing local territory within a global narrative. Islamic State’s declaration of a

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\textsuperscript{646} For a good historical account, see Abdul Syukur, Gerakan usroh di Indonesia: peristiwa lampung 1989 (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2003).


\textsuperscript{648} “Wide prosecution ‘trawl net’ hopes finally to land Bashir,” Jakarta Globe, February 16, 2011.
world-wide caliphate on June 29, 2014 galvanised jihadists across the region, even if the Jemaah Islamiyah mainstream rejected the move. The Mujahidin of Eastern Indonesia (MIT), a small militant group based in Poso, Sulawesi, led by Santoso (alias Abu Wardah), a former Darul Islam member, became the first group in the region to pledge allegiance to Islamic State. Like the Aceh camp before it, MIT sought to connect its weak and isolated fight for a safe base in the jungle to global jihad, adopting global jihadist iconography along the way.

The influence of the IS agenda in Southeast Asia raises the possibility of a return to a wider regional scale of jihad. Southeast Asian jihadists have travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight for ISIS under the banner of its Archipelagic Unit (Katibah Nusantara), a mostly Malay-speaking group constituted of members from Indonesia, Malaysia, but also the Southern Philippines and Singapore. Meanwhile, jihadists in the Southern Philippines have formally affiliated with ISIS, with Abu Sayyaf leader, Isnilon Hapilon, appointed the Islamic State amir for Southeast Asia. 649 Although affiliation with IS is opposed by many jihadists in Southeast Asia, the history of regional jihadist assemblage shows that ideological discord is not necessarily a barrier to jihadist mobilization across the region. Without cooperation between counter-terrorism police in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, hyper-mobile actors and efficient organisers—newly inspired by Islamic State—may yet again bring regional jihad to Southeast Asia.

Conclusion

The disruption of the regional jihadist assemblage and the shift from regional to translocal jihad was not inevitable. In certain parts of the world where governance is weaker there are examples of conflicts diffusing to form “regional conflict complexes,” such as in the African Great Lakes region. Regional conflict complexes can become entrenched through the mutually reinforcing transnational connections between local conflict hotspots. 650 In Southeast Asia a worst case scenario along those lines could see intense jihadist mobilization in the Southern Philippines spread conflict from the tri-border area to parts of Malaysia and Indonesia where there are latent religious


hostilities. At the same time, individual jihadist organisers and entrepreneurs could seize the opportunity to reassemble a region-wide constellation of human and material resources that has in recent years remained largely in abeyance.

Although such a scenario is unlikely in the foreseeable future, repeatedly in recent decades local jihadists in Southeast Asia have demonstrated a capacity to organise themselves regionally. Such a capacity is enhanced by greater regional integration and communication due to processes of globalisation. Yet this need not be the only trend. A general move to integrate and cooperate on the part of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries in the area of counter-terrorism policing would greatly limit the opportunities of jihadists with regional aspirations.
CONCLUSION

In a survey of the first decade of 21st century jihadism in Indonesia widely circulated on jihadi websites in 2011, an author writing under the *nom de guerre* Abu Jaisy al-Ghareeb observes that performing the deed of jihad is always shaped by a number of local conditions. These conditions include the strength of the enemy, the condition of the society, the ease of logistics, and “each country’s geographical conditions.” For example, in Afghanistan the advantages are that the enemy’s camps are in the cities, but the mujahidin control the mountains. Also, “the border regions are famously free.” Meanwhile, in the Philippines and Pattani (Southern Thailand), he writes, territory is maintained by using the jungle as a base and the local population for protection. “Essentially,” Abu Jaisy concludes, “what we have to understand is that each land of jihad [*bumi jihad*] demands a different strategy and each strategy has its own characteristics.”

In this thesis I have sought to show how Southeast Asia’s unique lands of jihad have shaped the emergence of global jihadism in the region. I began this study seeking to answer two central interlocking questions. First, why did a local Indonesian jihadist movement transform into a transnational movement? Second, why did Jemaah Islamiyah, the new organization to emerge from this shift to the transnational scale, enter into such close collaboration with al-Qaeda, including collaboration on the attacks of September 11? I answered these questions by way of a historical narrative that captures, to put it succinctly, the globalization of Southeast Asian jihadism.

In summary, Indonesian jihadism underwent a process of transnationalization, beginning in the mid-1980s as a result of overwhelming Suharto regime repression, which had the unintended consequence of displacing the movement to the safe haven of neighbouring Malaysia, through the emigration of key movement leaders. Then, from the transnational space of a rapidly globalizing and Islamizing Malaysia of the 1980s and 1990s, the jihadist movement expanded further still to the regional scale, connecting militants from the Philippines to Australia. Taken as a whole, I have

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characterized this emergent web of jihadist actors, organizations and materials, grounded in the physical and political geography of Southeast Asia, as a regional jihadist assemblage. At the turn of the century, this assemblage enabled entrepreneurial jihadist actors to mobilize resources and execute attacks across Southeast Asia on an ad hoc basis, without the need to garner ideological uniformity or organizational cohesion in support of such attacks. Furthermore, it was access to the mobilization opportunities presented by this regional assemblage that drew al-Qaeda into close collaboration with Southeast Asian jihadists, facilitating, among other events, the attacks of 9/11 and the second wave plot.

This analysis, therefore, transcends both a local focus on the importance of Indonesian jihadist actors and a global focus on the importance of al-Qaeda. It elicits what was unique about Southeast Asia that caused it to become, for a brief period at the turn of the millennium, the most important mobilization space for global jihad outside of Afghanistan-Pakistan.

Following the 2002 Bali bombings, police and intelligence counterterrorism measures disrupted the Southeast Asia jihadist assemblage, reducing jihadist mobility and forcing changes in the way actors exploited space and scale. Generally, we saw a shift away from mobilization at the regional scale to what I have called translocal jihad, a scale at which jihadists sought to root themselves in local places and territories while enacting aspects of global jihadist ideology and imagery, inspired by either al-Qaeda or ISIS. Yet despite the decline of regional jihad since the turn of the century, jihadists from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and neighbouring countries continue to think and act regionally. The regional assemblage may be weakened but the making of new connections and the revival of old ones could allow entrepreneurial jihadists to launch attacks once again at a regional scale. Such a possibility, no doubt, has implications for the future security of not just Southeast Asia but the broader Asia-Pacific.

**Research significance and future directions**

Throughout this thesis I have sought to illustrate how jihadism is structured by political geography. Responding flexibly to the strictures and opportunities of space and scale, jihadists in Southeast Asia adapted their organizations and networks in ways that changed the nature of their operations and the threats they posed to societies. An
appreciation of such a process raises a number of implications for the study of jihadism and terrorism more broadly.

Foremost amongst these implications is that a greater attention to political geography might garner insights into the diffusion and endurance of jihadism in other parts of the world. Attention to diasporic spaces and safe havens in neighbouring countries might help to explain how a local militant network can grow into a transnational network, potentially posing a greater threat to a larger geographic area. As this study demonstrates, the role of government policy in the diffusion of militancy is critical. Suharto regime policies had the unintentional and indirect consequence of creating a regionally mobile militant diaspora on Indonesia’s doorstep. Such unintended consequences of political geography are important for policy makers to bear in mind today when they consider their response to the return to the region of Southeast Asian militants freshly skilled and radicalized from the conflicts in Iraq and Syria.

Also from a geographical approach, this thesis has introduced assemblage thinking as a novel way to analyze the complexities of jihadist collaboration and mobilization. Operationalized at the regional scale, sensitivity to the jihadist assemblage as a unit of analysis might bring awareness to other instances of the gathering of cross-border militant capabilities that are otherwise obscured by approaches that focus narrowly on certain separate groups, organizations or networks. Indeed, an appreciation of the potential for disparate networks, materials and spaces to merge into a regional assemblage is critical to understanding the threat posed by militants across space. As this study has shown, with access to a loose and distributed assemblage, jihadist entrepreneurs are able to overcome problems of resource scarcity and ideological difference in order to mobilize attacks against their perceived enemies. This is the case for jihadism in Southeast Asia, which is embedded in a cluster of Muslim communities at the periphery of the Muslim world. Here I have used an assemblage approach to explain why al-Qaeda collaborated so closely with Southeast Asian jihadists on 9/11 and separate joint operations around the same period of time. But an assemblage approach is also potentially applicable to other parts of the world in which jihadist networks and organisations form a distinct supranational regional pattern. These include the Sahel region in North Africa, the Caucasuses, the Arabian peninsula, and, of course, Afghanistan–Pakistan. Yet each region must be studied in its own right because each
has its own particular dynamics. For example, recurrent jihadist activity in Indonesia in response to the ongoing persecution of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar is unlikely to be paralleled outside of Southeast Asia and cannot be understood simply through the lens of global jihad.\textsuperscript{652} Myanmar-inspired jihadism must be understood within a cross-border, Southeast Asian context.

Insights about the potential for regional assemblage and regional mobilization are particularly relevant to national-level counterterrorism policy. National governments are still yet to catch up to a rapidly globalizing environment in which jihadists, among other transnational criminal networks, seek to exploit the differences and discrepancies in the rule of law between nation states. While it is overly optimistic to hope that countries throughout the entire world harmonize their counterterrorism policies, it is reasonable to suggest that member states of a regional bloc, in Southeast Asia’s case the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), do more to coordinate and share intelligence on regional actors who represent a common threat. As this study has shown, local networks that do not necessarily pose a threat to governments may form part of a distributed assemblage that is susceptible to mobilization by small numbers of jihadist entrepreneurs. This insight must be factored into any assessment of the capacity of jihadists to mobilize resources and to mobilize across space.

Similar insights apply, of course, to the world of scholarship in which even the best research on Southeast Asian jihadism has been limited by country-specific perspectives. In particular, it is important to not see Southeast Asian jihadism solely through the prism of the most populous country in the region, Indonesia, even if Indonesian jihadists outnumber their counterparts from other countries and even if they themselves exhibit an Indonesia-centric bias. As this study has shown, although Indonesia was central to the emergence of Southeast Asian jihadism, it was the assemblage of elements from spaces beyond Indonesia that caused the region to become so central to the rise of global jihad.

Jihadist assemblages, however, may be found at more than just the regional scale. I have focused on a regional-scale assemblage because doing so answered the most interesting

research questions that arose from my fieldwork in Southeast Asia. But the best use of assemblage thinking is as a toolkit to analyze aspects of social complexity at a multiplicity of scales and spaces. For a long time, research on jihadism has been challenged by the problem of how to capture the full complexity of jihadist cooperation within an ever-turning kaleidoscope of actors, organizations, networks, and ad hoc configurations. Some might remember that early research was so uncertain about the formal institutionalization of the group of jihadists surrounding Osama bin Laden that the name “al-Qaeda” was sometimes hedged with quotation marks. More recent work on jihadism, such as Assaf Moghadam’s *Nexus of Global Jihad*, the most comprehensive effort so far to explain jihadist cooperation, has relied on the notion of “informal networks.” In this context, assemblage thinking, with its attention to the formation and dispersion of temporary constellations of actors and other elements, provides a new methodological toolkit with which to analyze jihadist collaboration. While far from a “solution” to the problem of collaboration, the growing body of literature under the rubric of assemblage theory, especially where it intersects with the study of social movements and geography, contains an array of concepts and fresh approaches that might enrich our ability to conceptualize the protean social structures of assembling and disassembling jihadists.

Perhaps above all, this study illustrates the flexibility of jihadists in adapting to changes in their political geography. Of course, counterterrorism measures, such as those during the war on terror, fundamentally reshape the terrain in which jihadists operate. But clandestine networks have an ability to adapt quietly and in small enough numbers not to be easily detected. As we have seen in the case of Noordin Top, small numbers of militants organized in ad hoc groups are capable of executing mass casualty attacks and creating a climate of fear, despite the constraints of limited mobility and resources.

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656 For an early example, see Colin McFarlane, “Translocal assemblages: space, power and social movements,” *Geoforum* 40, no. 4 (2009): 561–567.
The enduring geographical flexibility of jihadists in Southeast Asia should remind analysts and researchers to consider the various spatial opportunities opening and closing to militant networks over time. Some such “opportunity structures” for jihadists have been fixtures of Southeast Asia from many years, most notably the undergoverned spaces at the southern peripheries of Thailand and the Philippines. Likewise, the ungoverned tri-border zone of the Sulu archipelago, situated at the confluence of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, continues to host some of the most hardened jihadists in the region. Other spaces, however, like training camps and bases in remote and rugged parts of Indonesia, can rapidly shift location according to changing local factors. Still other jihadist spaces may appear for the first time due to changing political circumstances. For example, in the event of a process of democratization and decentralization in Malaysia similar to Indonesia after the fall of Suharto, jihadists across the region would likely look to exploit any emerging gaps and weaknesses in governance as opportunities for networking and mobilization. In Malaysia in 2009 we saw the ability of a prominent jihadist prison escapee from Singapore, Mas Selamat Kastari, to find safe haven within the old Jemaah Islamiyah network in the Malacca hinterland, a part of the assemblage that had otherwise been in abeyance. Although it is not possible to predict micro-, meso-, and macro-level changes in political geography, it is important to understand that some militants, like the jihadists of this study—embedded in local communities but highly mobile—will continue to seek out new opportunities across the diverse regional and translocal spaces with which they are familiar.

A comprehensive spatial analysis of jihadism, however, must address one critical domain that is ever increasing in importance: cyberspace. Already, rapid advances in information and communications technology, combined with an atmosphere of heightened border and territorial security, has made the ungoverned spaces of the Internet one of the most important frontiers of jihadist mobilization. Signs of the growing importance of cyberspace can be seen in jihadists’ early adoption of social media networks and encrypted chat platforms. Ungoverned spaces in cyberspace may be particularly effective for jihadist mobilization if combined with the exploitation of

ungoverned physical spaces. Currently, the most popular encrypted chat platform for jihadists around the world, including in Southeast Asia, is the Telegram application. But the technologies and platforms favoured by jihadists will change over time, as their flexible and adaptive use of cyberspace parallels their fluid approach to physical space.

All this suggests that further research on the virtual spaces of jihad in Southeast Asia is warranted. The online realm is particularly relevant in Indonesia, which is emerging as a social media powerhouse, driven by high rates of mobile internet connectivity. Indeed, new online spaces for jihadist mobilization may emerge in Indonesia and diffuse to the region beyond.658

Finally, future research might consider not just how jihadists exploit cyberspace in isolation, like the proverbial “lone wolf,” but how their mobility through virtual space feeds back upon their mobility through physical space, and vice versa. For such research to be most effective, it would integrate the study of jihadism online with the study of jihadism across the diverse spaces of the physical world such as the border zones and safe havens considered in this thesis. In doing so, we should recognize that all these spaces, both old and new, constitute different parts of the same relational world in which jihadists assemble.

658 For a recent survey, see Institute For Policy Analysis Of Conflict, “Online Activism And Social Media Usage Among Indonesian Extremists,” IPAC Report No. 24, October 2015.
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