Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
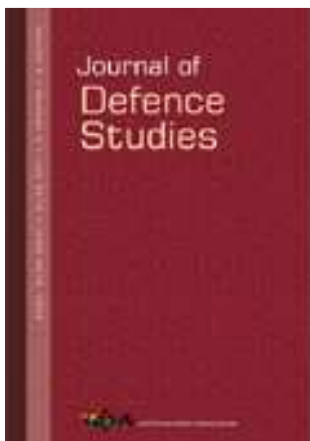
No.1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg
Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi-110010

Jihadist Radicalisation in India: Internal Challenges, External Threats

Adil Rasheed

Please Scroll down for Article

Jihadist Radicalisation in India
Internal Challenges, External Threats

*Adil Rasheed**

The Indian strategic community has for long debated aspects of jihadist radicalisation in the country—particularly over its origins, causes, extent, trajectory and possible counter-measures. This article posits that in the absence of clear perspectives, the incipient threat of jihadist radicalisation has the potential to metastasise and snowball quickly, as has been witnessed in other parts of the world in recent times. Currently, there are three strands of jihadist radicalisation seeking to influence Indian minds, namely, homegrown radicalisation, cross-border radicalisation and the global jihadist radicalisation of transnational groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Although all the three forms have different strategic orientation and goals, they often collude to administer a heady brew to impressionable minds vexed by the country's several socio-cultural, economic and political challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Since the late twentieth century, jihadist radicalisation[1] has emerged as a highly intractable, sui generis phenomenon. In fact, the subject of countering jihadist terrorism around the world has now rightly come under the more holistic purview of countering violent extremism and radicalisation (CVER). This is due to the growing realisation in the global strategic community that it is difficult to tackle the issue of

---

* The author is a Research Fellow at Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), New Delhi.

terrorism from a purely security-oriented or militaristic standpoint—by merely conducting effective intelligence-based operations and at times full-scale military campaigns—as a whole range of carefully calibrated approaches across various ideational, religious, socio-cultural, political, educational and economic vectors are required to fight an essentially ideological battle at the social, religious and political levels.

The Indian subcontinent has endured the scourge of jihadism for a long time, much before the world took serious cognisance of the threat following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States (US). Since the time of its emergence in the Afghanistan–Pakistan (Af-Pak) region to oust Soviet forces at the behest of the US, modern jihadism has freely operated from this epicenter of terrorism. In fact, the entire subcontinent remains vulnerable to jihadist indoctrination as little less than a third of the world's Muslim population resides in South Asia.[2] The state of Pakistan, which was founded to realise the ideals of political Islam, today admits to be struggling against the virulent manifestation of its own divisive ideology. In India, although Muslims constitute only 14 per cent of the country's citizenry, they account for the world's third largest Muslim population; however, they have been largely resistant to the threat of radicalisation thus far.[3] Again, Sri Lanka and Nepal also have substantially large Muslim communities.

It is in this geopolitical and socio-cultural space that India has to remain actively vigilant in its battle against a rising tide of violent Islamist extremism and jihadist radicalisation. Although India has long suffered the ills of religious and communal politics and has withstood frequent bouts of communal clashes, such instances have been recently upstaged by rising number of carefully orchestrated terrorist attacks against state institutions itself, as well as acts of indiscriminate violence against the general public.

These red flags of 'homegrown terrorism' urgently call for the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive counter-radicalisation strategy in order to prevent civil discord and attacks against state institutions in ever-increasing numbers. India's unique societal particularities and peaceful stasis achieved between communities over the centuries has so far deterred security agencies from introducing full-scale counter-radicalisation measures, limiting themselves to deradicalising known terrorists in certain provinces, shunning even moderate counter-radicalisation campaigns employed by liberal countries of the West. This has done little to arrest—let alone reverse—the rising tide of

radicalisation, a problem compounded by the paucity of understanding about the processes of radicalisation and the factors that engender it in the national context.

<div align="center">

DEFINING RADICALISATION

</div>

In simple terms, radicalisation refers to the process of an individual's transformation from a moderate, law-abiding citizen into an active, anti-state, violent extremist.[4] According to the United Kingdom (UK) Home Office, radicalisation is '[t]he process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then join terrorist groups.'[5] Similarly, the Danish Security and Intelligence Agency (PET) calls radicalisation '[a] process by which a person to an increasing extent accepts the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to reach a specific political/ideological objective.'[6]

In the Indian context, the problem of jihadist radicalisation is a fairly recent phenomenon and there is even a section of intelligentsia which does not regard it a problem meriting serious consideration. It is being argued that while other countries in the subcontinent—Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and now Maldives—have struggled to check the scourge of Islamic radicalism, the Indian Muslim community appears to be fairly resistant to violent extremism. It has been pointed out that very few Indian Muslims have joined al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan over the decades, and the number of those joining the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has also been quite less compared to several other countries with much smaller Muslim populations. It is further stressed that there have been hardly any Indian Muslims outside Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) who have supported the separatist movement in that state.[7]

This inherent 'resilience' of Indian Muslims has often been lauded as largely a sign of their strong commitment and patriotism to the national cause. Among other reasons cited for the failure of Islamist radicalisation to catch on in India include the prior decision of Indian Muslims to reject the Islamic state of Pakistan and stay on in India as part of a secular nation, implying that the divisive political message does not resonate with Indian Muslims any more. The failure of Muslim states in the region (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Maldives) to develop themselves as prosperous states and cohesive societies, it is argued, does not present as a viable option to pursue for Indian Muslims. In addition, the Salafi-

Wahhabi ideological movement (to which most global jihadists like Al Qaeda and ISIS subscribe to) fundamentally oppose Hanafi school of Sunni Islam (followed by majority of Muslims in India). Therefore, the terror message of these groups finds little theological traction in India. Even Indian followers of the Sunni Ahle-Hadeeth (the broader ideology from which Salafi-Wahhabi movement emanates) pursue a moderate version of their orientation in the country. This doctrinal difference has been attributed as a reason for the failure of Salafi-Wahhabi global terror networks from gaining much support in the country.

Irrespective of these and other stated causes for the relatively low levels of jihadist radicalisation compared to other countries, there is no denying that Islamist radicalisation has started picking up pace in the country in recent times. It is thus pointless to rest on the laurels of India's composite social ethos; rather, it is important to get one's act together to confront an emerging threat.

There is no escaping the fact that there has been a marked upsurge in radicalisation activities among members of the Muslim community in recent times, with increased number of terrorist attacks, rise in number of terror cells and modules exposed and busted by security forces as well as a proliferation of literature promoting radical Islamist ideas circulating across the country. The history of radical Islamist organisations, such as Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), Deendar Anjuman, Islamic Sevak Sangh (converted to People Democratic Front and later People Front of India), Indian Mujahideen and Muslim United Liberation of Assam, as well as Islamist militant organisations in J&K points to the fact that Islamic radical forces in the country have been operating in the country for some time.[8]

In fact, if one were to scan media reports of the last four years, it is evident that a sizeable number of Muslim youth decided to leave for Syria, with several being stopped and counselled, and many put under surveillance.[9] Since the rise of the ISIS monstrosity in Syria and Iraq, over a dozen Indian states have witnessed an upsurge in radicalisation, including Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Assam, J&K, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.[10]

Three Kinds of Jihadist Radicalisation

The country is currently confronted with jihadist radicalisation of broadly three kinds: homegrown radicalisation; cross-border radicalisation,

notably from the Af-Pak region; and finally, global jihadist radicalisation by non-state actors, such as al-Qaeda and the ISIS. Although all jihadist organisations, whether originating from India, its immediate neighbourhood or from other parts of the world, seek to impose an Islamic political order on society, they still have major divergences in their doctrinal, ideological, methodological and strategic orientations.

Thus, indigenous groups are more influenced by the theological doctrines and rituals practised in their own localities and are often driven by socio-political issues related to their immediate setting than by matters of larger regional or international concern. This situation specifically applies to the lower-class, less-educated recruits that are often radicalised by people in their own localities—by religious teachers, prayer leaders, family members, classmates or co-workers. Even the religious frames of references of indigenous groups are mostly derived from their local or regional historical context. Thus, Muslims in India resonate more with Islamic scholars like Ahmad Sirhindi and Abul Ala al-Mawdudi and schools of thought having originated in India, for example, the Deobandi and Barelvi schools of Hanafi Sunnis. They can rarely comprehend or resonate with the arguments and casuistry of Arab Islamic scholars and religious institutions like Al-Azhar University (called the Vatican of Sunni Islam), or theologians of such eminence as Imam Ghazzali (Algazel), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) or Ibn Taimiyyah.

Therefore, the radicalisation process of indigenous groups based in either India or Pakistan is largely bound to the 'think local, act local' dynamic. Even the Salafi jihadist groups in the region, like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), have to indigenise the process of radicalisation to distil the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology to the audience of the subcontinent. The main centres of this form of indigenous radicalisation are based in mosques, seminaries or *madari*s and other forums of religious instruction.

Again, the extremist narrative of Pakistan-backed terror groups is always in congruence with and never inimical to Islamabad's broad military and political objectives and is singularly directed against enemy states, namely, India and Afghanistan. Here, the Islamic narrative is dovetailed to the suit and meet the needs of Pakistan's strategic interests. In fact, this narrative supplements the state's political, economic and diplomatic support paradigms. Many jihadist groups in the Af-Pak region, particularly the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, may follow a more independent ideological approach than Pakistan-backed anti-India groups like LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).

Again, al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) follows a less hard-line Salafist and a more pan-Islamist theological approach when compared to the ultra-extremist Salafi variant disseminated by the ISIS. Therefore, AQIS has been able to forge alliance with the Taliban (which follows the Hanafi Deobandi school of Sunni Islam that Salafis detest for its blind following—*taqleed*—of Abu Hanifa's jurisprudence). It is this approach of allowing indigenous Islam to work for its global jihadist agenda which has helped al-Qaeda survive international crackdown since 2001. Thus, al-Qaeda follows the approach of 'think global, act local'.

In complete contrast to these jihadist groups, the ISIS follows a highly divisive brand of Salafism as it brands any individual who does not accept Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as *Khalifaah* (Caliph) of the entire global Muslim community an apostate (*kafir*), and therefore finds even terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and extremist Salafis (such as the Suroois) as outside the pale of Islam. Therefore, it first converts all recruits to its brand of violent extremism and then initiates the process of formal induction. This extremist standpoint makes the ISIS opposed to all Muslim sects, including Deobandi groups like the Taliban, the Kashmiri separatist group, the Hurriyat, and other terrorist operators in the region. Surprisingly, the ISIS' hard-line philosophy makes it more attractive to young jihadi initiates who find its unmitigated intolerance a sign of its pristine purity.

Having said that, it allows self-styled jihadis to conduct terror attacks in the name of the ISIS. Thus, ISIS' uniform international model has been described as the centralised 'think global, act global' model.

HOMEGROWN RADICALISATION

Jihadist radicalisation in India is partly the outcome of the country's exclusively internal socio-political, economic and communal dynamics, and partly the result of external factors and agencies, emanating either from the neighbouring states or from the purveyors of global jihad. To begin with, there is a need to understand the internal dynamics at play which has started to push the community's youth away from the nation's socio-political ethos and into the lap of the jihadists.

Since the late 1980s, there has been a growing trend among most religious communities of India (which is part of a global trend) to move away from the abstract, spiritual and ethical adherence to religious values and principles and focus more on outward display of religious identity, dogma and rituals. Several socio-political theories have been posited

for the rise of such phenomena worldwide, such as the undermining of ethnic and religious identities with the rise of liberal cosmopolitan values and culture and the emergence of fundamentalist and jurisprudential understanding of religion at the expense of the mystical and mythological orientation of the past. These discussions raise pertinent philosophical issues, but lie outside the scope of this article.

What is important to note here is that this emergent expression of religious formalism, though not a manifestation of religious radicalism in and of itself, arguably plays a catalytic role in the formulation of ultra-conservative, extremist interpretations of faith (promoting ideas of exclusivity and exceptionalism) and facilitates their subsequent sustenance and proliferation in society.

For the Indian Muslim community, the phenomenon of religious formalism has been pronounced and in step with its general tendency towards reclusiveness and withdrawal following the partition of India, which has led it to imbibe ultra-conservative religious ideals at the expense of embracing modern liberal ideas and a scientific temper. The marginalisation of the community has been largely self-induced, often compounded by a pervasive sense of persecution and worsened by instances of communal violence such as those following the Babri Masjid demolition in Ayodhya in 1992 and Gujarat riots in 2002. These two incidents stand out as major excuses for violent extremism in the narratives of radical and firebrand Muslim leaders as well as terrorist groups, such as the Indian Mujahideen and SIMI.

It is also surprising that the threat of homegrown Muslim terrorism has emerged in the country not from the usual professed practitioners of faith. In fact, Indian madrasa education has hardly produced any prominent radical leader or terrorist till date. The problem of terrorists coming out of *madari*s (seminaries) is a problem afflicting Pakistan and other countries of the region to a far greater extent than India.[11] It has been observed many times that Darul Uloom Deoband and even the Indian wing of non-Kashmiri Jamaat-e-Islami have remained ardently committed to secularism and democracy of India, since the time they rejected the partition of India and the formation of Pakistan.

Having said that, there has been legitimate cause for concern regarding the kind of religious instruction being imparted in the seminaries and education institutions associated with the Ahle Hadeeth, Deobandi and even Barelvi movements. For a long time, members of civil society have complained that these institutions preach 'a hardline and exclusivist

version of Islam based on a narrow literal interpretation' of the scriptures.[12] Although it is true that Indian *madari*s do not preach militant jihad, their ideas of religious exceptionalism and gender inequality have been seen as facilitating the growth of fundamentalism and extremism. Several Muslim educational institutions imparting modern education, though less dogmatic in their orientation than conventional seminaries, have also drawn criticism for being exclusivist in their pedagogical orientation.

In its report issued in 2006, the Sachar Committee[13] found that a large number of Muslims in the country were self-employed as they found it difficult to get public and private sector jobs. The tendency to be economically independent had also led members of the community to be less accepting of the mainstream discourse. The report further emphasised that more Muslim representation in private and public sector jobs would foster greater interaction and assimilation of communities. Eight years later, the Amitabh Kundu Committee report[14] also noted that there was little difference in its findings than those noted in the Sachar report.

An even more disconcerting trend towards radicalisation is conspicuous among Muslim youth who receive modern and secular education. Most members of indigenous terrorist groups such as Indian Mujahideen have never received traditional 'madrasa' education and have been educated in secular schools. Some analysts have sought to explain this apparently inexplicable fact as a general reaction of 'guilt' among the educated Muslim youth induced by the extremists. Thus, educated Muslim youth, for fear of losing their religiosity, end up being more fanatical, bigoted and radicalised zealots than their religiously educated counterparts. It is this generation of so-called Muslim 'reverts'—who abandon liberal and secular values and embrace the dubious principles of 'modern political Islam' as its doctrines are somehow more appealing to their rational minds than the esotericism of traditional seminaries. Add to this the Shakespearean ills that frustrate the youth: 'the law's delays, the insolence of office and spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes'[15] and we get the right brew for the self-alienated Muslim youth to embrace the self-styled rectitude of radical jihad.

It is also true that the homegrown jihadist does not remain independent or Indian for a long time. Such individuals and groups, like the Indian Mujahideen, SIMI or Kashmiri separatists, eventually get influenced and subsumed by foreign jihadist movements and groups. Therefore, the attempt of anti-terrorist and counter-radicalisation campaigns in the

country should be to identify and isolate some of these self-radicalised individuals and groups before they get infected by foreign antigens and make the internal malaise worse.

However, the threat of lone wolf operations by self-radicalised citizens with no overt affiliation to any jihadist organisation is in itself a serious concern. This truth became painfully evident in the Bhopal–Ujjain passenger train bombing, which occurred on 7 March 2017. The terror bombing occurred at Jabri railway station in Shajapur district of Madhya Pradesh, injuring 10 passengers on the train. One of the terrorist suspects, Saifullah Khan, was later killed in an encounter in Lucknow. It was stated by the police that the module was self-radicalised and did not receive any financial support from any group, although it is reported that the module was inspired by the ISIS ideology.[16] Six persons were later arrested in the case. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) reports stated that the ISIS-radicalised module had also conspired to bomb a rally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.[17]

Cross-Border Radicalisation

The second threat of jihadist radicalisation for the country emanates from its immediate neighbourhood, principally from Pakistan and Afghanistan, which is mainly directed at the Muslim population of Kashmir.

Pakistan's method of fomenting insurgency in J&K can be best described as 'jujitsu politics' or 'the logic of political violence'.[18] Although Pakistan denies its role in fomenting what it calls the 'legitimate, indigenous and nationalist movement' in the state of J&K,[19] its trained jihadist proxy militias as well as intelligence operatives infiltrate the borders not only to carry out guerrilla attacks against the Indian forces but also to radicalise and train the indigenous population.

By hiding behind the civilian population, Pakistan-backed jihadists conduct acts of violence to provoke security forces into cracking down on the populace. The resulting domestic blowback then feeds the narrative of persecution into an endless loop of terrorist attacks and government's security response. The aim of jihadist groups is thus to discredit moderate elements of the population and find excuse for carrying out further violence by maligning security forces over the severity of their crackdown. Thus, the attempt is to turn the strength of the security forces against them, as is done in jujitsu form of martial arts.[20]

Again, Pakistan has based its radicalisation campaign in Kashmir on the pillars of rabid Islamism. Its jihadist forces have endeavoured to bring about structural changes to the ethos of Kashmir society,[21] turning the multi-cultural Sufi character of the Valley into a hardcore Islamic one. Since the beginning of the insurgency in 1989, Pakistan-backed jihadist groups have advocated the doctrine of 'Nizam-e-Mustafa' (Rule of the Prophet) as the goal of their struggle. Islamist groups like Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, Dukhtaran-e-Millat, Jamiat-ul-Ulemma Islam, Al Badr and Al Jihad Force have espoused the merger of J&K with Pakistan, and even the establishment of an Islamic caliphate.[22]

India as the status quo state, assured of its secular and democratic polity, has never felt the need to strategically counter the skewed and extremist messages emanating from across the border to stoke militancy in J&K. However, the level of violence and general confusion in the province has created a situation where India needs to send out its message of liberal humanitarian values, rule of law and secularism, as enshrined in the Constitution, to douse the flames of terrorism and religious bigotry. There is also the need to counter the false narratives and conspiracy theories prevalent in J&K about the history of accession, which is misguiding young generations into taking up arms against the state. The importance of religious and ideological counter-narratives in this respect cannot be discounted as well.

In addition to Pakistan, India also faces potential threats of radicalisation from Bangladesh (especially among the Rohingya refugees streaming into the country), the rise of Salafi extremism in Maldives and from other neighbouring states.

Global Jihadist Radicalisation

Before studying the impact of global jihadist organisations on Indian security, it may be relevant to understand the phenomenon of global jihad, as it emerged internationally over the last century.

Global jihadism is the militant offshoot of the radical ideology of political Islam which emerged in the Arab world in the early twentieth century, mainly out of the Salafi-Wahhabi movement. With vicious crackdown at every stage of its violent campaign since the mid-twentieth century, modern jihadism introduced more virulence and more extreme re-interpretation of religious concepts to give more potency to the movement's cause, devising a more strident and incisive strategic design

of sustained transnational and asymmetric warfare against the humanist and liberal socio-political and economic international order, for achieving the end state in an Arab-Salafist global caliphate.

Therefore, global jihadist organisations such as al-Qaeda and the ISIS have all emerged out of a deviant and militant version of Salafi-Wahhabi Sunni Islam, and its adherents constitute about 10 per cent of Salafis within the larger community of Sunni Muslims. Thus, the main focus for countering global jihadism should be to discredit and debunk the ideological construct of Salafi jihadism.

The ideology of Salafi jihadism seeks to provide an alternative to the modern social, political and economic way of life, by rationally repackaging fundamentalist Islamic concepts in a socio-political, legal and economic context. The attempt is to project Islam not merely as a religion but as a complete political, legal, socio-cultural, militaristic and economic system in its own right. Many Salafi jihadist ideologues have, over the years, developed a vast body of literature to make Islam more relevant even in the secular domains of life. Young, impressionable minds that are predisposed to accepting new alternative ideas for replacing existing socio-political systems, both in the West and the Arab world, are often fascinated by the Islamist and jihadist experiments. It is partly for this reason that many educated youth fall into the spell of this new variant of Islam and end up accepting its more revolutionary and militant ideas.

Political Islam and transnational jihadism emerged in the aftermath of the dismemberment of Ottoman Caliphate after World War I, when the entire Arab world was carved out into separate nation states by Western colonial powers. These fledgling nation states never developed strong state institutions and therefore were controlled by brutal dictators. So, global jihadists, such as al-Qaeda and the ISIS, are opposed to Western political ideologies, including nation states, capitalism and democracy, as well as the despotic rulers of nation states the West supported to maintain security and stability in the Middle East.

The main ideologues of Salafi jihadism who have created a body of radicalising literature for the development and spread of this socio-political movement include Syed Qutb, Taqiuddin Nabhani, Ibn Taimiyyah, Muhammad abd-al-Salam Faraj, Abu Musab al-Suri, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and Abu Bakr Naji.[23] Salafi jihadist organisations use a canon of books to radicalise young impressionable minds.[24] In addition to this radicalising literature, much of jihadist literature provides a lot of

material on conducting lone wolf attacks and making weapons out of everyday products available in the market. For example, in the second issue of its magazine *Rumiyah* (Arabic for 'Rome'), the ISIS called upon its supporters to attack non-Muslims with knives as one 'could dispose of his weapon after each use, finding no difficulty in acquiring another one.'[25]

In recent years, global jihadist radicalisation has been revived. There are two developments that have fostered this revival: the drawing down of the US troop presence from Af-Pak region in 2011, and the emergence of the ISIS monstrosity in 2014.

The Menace of AQIS

No sooner did the US begin to draw down its troop presence in Afghanistan in the early half of this decade, that al-Qaeda Central (AQC) announced the establishment of its regional affiliate, AQIS, in September 2014.[26]

Although the centre of gravity and leadership of the AQIS is cited to be in Pakistan, the new group was created to operate throughout South Asia—particularly India and the state of J&K. In fact, this new terror conglomerate has incorporated many of the previous al-Qaeda associated groups, who had dispersed following the US-led war against the then Taliban regime in 2001.

There is still a lot of speculation about the groups that are now part of the AQIS, but a tentative list includes: Afghan Taliban (Afghanistan); Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (Pakistan); Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami or HuJI (Bangladesh and Pakistan); Harkat-ul-Mujahideen or HuM (Indian state of J&K); Harkat-ul-Mujahideen al-Alami or HuMA (Pakistan); LeT (Indian state of J&K); and JeM.[27]

Interestingly, in a video message, AQC Chief Ayman al-Zawahiri named Asim Umar as the 'Amir' of the Pakistan-based AQIS in 2014. According to international intelligence agencies, Asim Umar is a theologian originally from the town of Saharanpur, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Known to be a fierce rhetorician, Umar is said to have taught at a Karachi madrasa, to have penned four books promoting jihadism and to have been associated with HuJI, HuM and other jihadist groups.[28] The appointment of a Pakistan-based anti-India 'Amir', having strong connections with indigenous jihadist groups, is indicative of al-Qaeda's plan to graft and imbed its tentacles in the region for the long haul.

Many theories have been propounded by security analysts and the media regarding the reasons behind the grandiose announcement by al-Zawahiri on the establishment of AQIS.[29] It has been said that the move was part of AQC's existential struggle following the rise of the ISIS on the global scene and its growing influence and outreach in the subcontinent as well. However, it needs to be understood that the group had started its operations before 2014 and was only formally established in September 2014.

A more plausible theory has been the desire of al-Qaeda to reclaim the territory it operated in before the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. An article in al-Qaeda's online mouthpiece *Resurgence*, in late 2014, had terror ideologue Hassan Yusuf giving credence to this proposition when he said that the formation of AQIS 'comes in the wake of the American defeat and withdrawal from Afghanistan…This Jihad will not end with the American withdrawal from Afghanistan; America's defeat is only the prelude. What lies in wait for her despicable "allies" in this region is yet to unfold.'[30]

The June 2017 AQIS 'Code of Conduct' document specifically focuses on Kashmir in India, making it amply clear that India's security apparatus—the police, military and intelligence agencies—as well as the leaders of right-wing Hindu organisations would be prime targets.[31] This is in tandem with al-Zawahiri's April 2006 video message praising jihadist movements against the Indian establishment in J&K. Shortly after the 'Code of Conduct' was released, AQIS formally established and endorsed a new jihadist group, Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGH; Supporters of Holy War in India), in Kashmir under the HM renegade militant Zakir Rashid Bhat (now known as Zakir Musa), with a media wing named al-Hurr.[32]

Sticking to its firebrand anti-Westphalian, Salafi jihadist ideology, this group's chief and former head honcho of HM, Zakir Musa, started lashing out at the Kashmiri separatist leaders of the Hurriyat for terming the Kashmir issue 'political' and not religious. In February 2018, the group took responsibility for the killing of Yusuf Nadeem, an activist of Syed Ali Shah Geelani-led Hurriyat Conference faction, in the central district of Budgam. In his message, Zakir Musa claimed that the Hurriyat was unwilling to establish Sharia rule in the state and was indulging in 'dirty politics'.[33]

The AQIS has also been very active in southern India, with its affiliate, the so-called 'Base Movement' (BM), coming to public attention with a

series of bombings in 2016. Little is known about this group's origins, but it appears to have existed in some form since January 2015 when, shortly after the attack on the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, a threatening letter bearing the group's name was sent to the Tamil daily, *Dinamalar*. It read, 'Yesterday Paris—Charlie Hebdo, Tomorrow Dinamalar', apparently indicating a planned attack similar to the one in Paris.[34] However, the authorities questioned the letter's authenticity and no attack occurred.

The name 'Base Movement' resurfaced in January 2016, when state authorities in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka received a new set of threatening letters. One of these letters even carried a threat against French President Francois Hollande, who was to visit the country later that month.[35] The letters threatened to carry out terror strikes mainly in southern states. This was followed by five low-intensity bombs going off in law courts over the course of the year—in Chittoor and Nellore, Andhra Pradesh (7 April and 12 September, respectively); Kollam and Mysore, Karnataka (15 June and 1 August, respectively); and Malappuram, Kerala (1 November).[36] Signed under the appellation 'Base Movement—Kovai', the letters were traced by the police back to Singanallur in Coimbatore.[37] Since then NIA arrested four BM suspects in 2017; Abbas Ali, Suleiman Muhammad Abdullah, Samsun Karim Raja and Mohamed Ayub Ali. It has been reported that the court blasts organized by BM were linked to the ongoing judicial trials of SIMI members and were related to remnants of the banned al-Umma militant group, active in southern states in late 1990s.

ISIS Inroads into India

The AQIS has faced a new jihadist rival in the ISIS that has made major inroads into the jihadist cadres of the region previously associated with al-Qaeda. In October 2014, six top commanders of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, including its senior leader Shahidullah Shahid, announced their allegiance to the ISIS.[38] In the following months, the ISIS named Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan Chief, Hafiz Saeed Khan, as the *wali* (governor) of the 'Khorasan Province', which includes India.

Again, Pakistan-based jihadi group Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), earlier affiliated with the Taliban and al-Qaeda, defected to the ISIS. Even the Indian Mujahideen split in two, with the splinter of Sultan Armar forming Ansar-ul-Tawhid fi Bilad al-Hind (AuT)[39] to become the primary recruitment wing of the ISIS, and the Riyaz Bhatkal faction

continuing to owe allegiance to Pakistan's ISIS as well as to al-Qaeda.[40]

The jihadist organisation Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) is said to have developed ties with the ISIS, and the latter has claimed its members were behind some of the killings in the country. In early July 2016, militants put 20 people to death in a cafe in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, sparing only those who could recite from the Quran.[41] The people killed included nine Italians, seven Japanese, an Indian, an American and two local men. Bangladeshi forces then stormed the upscale Dhaka restaurant, killing six of the attackers and rescuing 13 captives. The ISIS then posted pictures of five of the attackers online, taking dubious credit for the heinous act.[42] Almost a week later (on 7 July 2016), two policemen and a woman were again killed in a terrorist attack on an Eid prayer gathering in Bangladesh, attributed to JMB.[43]

These attacks followed a statement in the ISIS's online English-language magazine, *Dabiq*, released in January 2016, wherein a jihadi calling himself head of the ISIS in Bangladesh, Sheikh Abu Ibrahim al-Hanif, claimed that the group is currently training fighters in Bangladesh and Pakistan to launch simultaneous attacks from the western and eastern borders of India, in order to create chaos.[44]

Across India, at least 103 people accused of having links with the ISIS have been arrested by the NIA and other state security agencies, according to a report published in late December 2017.[45] In a statement to the Rajya Sabha on 20 December 2017, Minister of State for the Ministry of Home Affairs, Hansraj Ahir, reportedly stated that out of 14 states, Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of arrests at 17, followed by Maharashtra (16), Telangana (16), Kerala (14) and Karnataka (eight).[46]

Beginning its operations in India just after announcing its so-called caliphate, the ISIS lured four Thane engineering students through the Internet to join the group in May 2014. It is said that one of them returned to India, two were killed, while the fourth was reportedly missing in action.[47] The very next month, the ISIS placed India on the map of its planned caliphate.

Then, in December 2014, Bengaluru police arrested the notorious ISIS Twitter handler, Mehdi Masroor Biswas, operating on the Twitter account @ShamiWitness. This was an ISIS propaganda outlet that was considered one of the most influential ISIS Twitter handles, which also helped ISIS in coordinating military operations. Biswas had established personal communications with English-speaking members of the ISIS and his account had international outreach, which included the attackers of the July 2016 terrorist attack in Dhaka, Bangladesh.[48]

In June 2016, the NIA busted a reported ISIS cell in Hyderabad, arresting its five alleged operators, after discovering it had ordered explosive precursor chemicals.[49] In late April 2017, the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad and the Delhi Police Special Cell apprehended three men from a reported ISIS cell, believed to be recruiting members. It also detained six others.[50] In late December last year, the NIA reportedly registered a case against five ISIS sympathisers from Kerala's Kannur district. The case was registered under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967.[51] In January 2018, the NIA again filed charge sheet against two suspected ISIS operatives from Kerala in the Kasargod ISIS module case, allegedly trying to radicalise and recruit for the ISIS.[52]

A large number of arrested ISIS members from India are said to have contacted a single online recruiter: Shafi Armar, also known as Yusuf-al-Hindi. Hailing from Karnataka, there are conflicting reports about his survival following ISIS' decimation from Syria and Iraq, but some believe he continues to recruit Indians online.[53]

It is reported that Telangana has registered the highest number of arrests per 100,000 Muslim population. It has also been reported that the ISIS is now trying to lure people in rural India by creating online content in vernacular languages.[54] In early February 2016, the ISIS announced its intention to expand into Kashmir as part of its broader Khorasan branch.[55]

The presence of the ISIS in J&K progressed gradually during 2017, starting with reports of ISIS flags being waved during rallies and protests around the Valley. While this claim is still pending official verification, ISIS's Amaq news agency claimed responsibility for an attack in Srinagar on 17 November 2017, which killed an Indian policeman. The militant killed in the attack, Mugees Ahmed Mir, is suspected to have been inspired by the ISIS's online propaganda and was found wearing an ISIS T-shirt at the time of the attack.[56] In December 2017, a pro-ISIS video in Urdu was shared via its Telegram channel, using the hashtag 'Wilayat Kashmir', in which a masked man representing 'Mujahideen in Kashmir' pledged allegiance to the ISIS and specifically invited the al-Qaeda-affiliated group AGH to join the caliphate.[57]

Online Radicalisation: The Indian 'Digihad'

In most studies of jihadist radicalisation, the importance of online radicalisation (which jihadists smugly refer to as 'digihad')[58] tends to get over-emphasised. It is generally averred that terrorist groups in the

past, such as violent communist actors, did not have the Internet in their revolutionary heydays or else their menace may have been more pernicious than the jihadist radicalisation of our times. However, many studies suggest that online radicalisation cannot replace the effectiveness of real in-person meeting of individuals and groups for the purpose of radicalisation.

A study conducted by the RAND Corporation, 'Radicalization in the Digital Era', found empirical evidence in support of the propositions that Internet enhances the opportunities to become radicalised and serves as an 'echo chamber of extremists', but could not conclusively establish the claims that allows the process of radicalisation without physical contact, in and of itself.[59]

However, notwithstanding their ideological issues with globalisation, jihadist organisations have made full use of the Internet and the social media for spreading their influence worldwide. In this respect, the so-called 'Dark Web' (part of the World Wide Web not indexed by Web search engines) provides the perfect 'breeding grounds' for the seeds of radicalisation to thrive and grow.

Most jihadist groups use the Internet for the purposes of:

1. propaganda;
2. scouting prospective radical recruits from the global throng, otherwise difficult to identify and contact in real world;
3. indoctrination and radicalisation;
4. terror financing, mainly through cryptocurrencies;
5. providing instructions for combat training and weapons manufacturing (particularly from objects of everyday use);
6. carrying out cyberattacks (although incidents of hacking have been few and of relatively very limited impact);
7. coordinating terrorist attacks; and
8. marshalling forces during active operations in theatres such as Syria, Iraq and Libya.

In the Indian context, online jihadist radicalisation is not limited only to global jihadist organisations such as the AQIS or ISIS, but also to that of indigenous and regional groups such as Indian Mujahideen, JeM, LeT, the Taliban and other online vernacular publications like the Urdu *Al-Qalam* newspaper issuing from Pakistan. Indian jihadist groups use a variety of social media apps, best suited for their disparate purposes. Thus, Kashmiri radicals employ WhatsApp groups for coordination

and communication: they simply create WhatsApp groups, add all the members, and communicate the date, time and place for carrying out mass protests or stone pelting.[60] In an interview with the author, cybersecurity expert Neha Vijay, a Senior Security Consultant at Kawach Media and Databases, stated that Kashmiri separatists and Pakistan-backed groups generate hundreds of Facebook pages after any confrontation with security forces. For instance, after Burhan Wani's death, multiple pages were created that called for avenging his death.[61] Again, many Facebook pages were created after Uri attack and India's 'surgical strike' against jihadist posts inside Pakistan territory.

Pakistan-based terror groups continue to select people manually as they want to verify their family background and learn about the person from their social contacts. Therefore, they do not select an individual only on the basis of online correspondence. Once an individual is selected, they enrol the person into their circle. It is only after induction that they start to communicate with him through online media. Pakistan-based terror groups do not believe in online learning of Islam. For them, it is mandatory that a Muslim radical follows a revered religious cleric. However, the ISIS follows no such restrictions.

Pakistan-backed terrorist groups can sometimes go tech-savvy. For instance, LeT used Google Earth to understand locations in Mumbai before the terrorist attacks on the city in 2008.[62] Unlike Kashmiri separatist groups and Pakistan-based jihadist mercenaries, the ISIS— following its recent drubbing—runs its global movement entirely online. According to Vijay, the AQIS has a substantial presence on the Internet already. Its now banned and blocked YouTube channels—Ansar AQIS and Al Firdaws—once had subscriptions in excess of 25,000. Its online magazines are *Nawai Afghan* and *Statements,* which come out in Urdu, English, Arabic, Bangla and Tamil. Its blocked Twitter accounts, Ansarul Islam and Abna_ul_Islam_media, had a following of over 1,300. Its Telegram accounts are said to have a member count of above 500.[63]

Similarly, JeM started circulating Masood Azhar's speeches in the form of audio cassettes. Thousands of CDs of speeches were circulated all over India. Then around 2003–04, JeM joined Internet platform and started circulating downloadable materials to supporters through anonymous links and emails. The JeM then started its weekly e-newspaper, *Al-Qalam*, which was distributed as e-newsletter to its supporters. This was followed by a chat group on Yahoo. Its official website was blocked immediately, even though it kept on changing servers to keep the website

alive. After Mumbai attacks when international pressure mounted on Pakistani government to act against terrorist groups such as LeT and JeM, the group gradually shifted from mainstream online platform to social media sites, blogs and forums. The most popular medium for JeM is Facebook, where every Friday Masood Azhar's statements are uploaded and subsequently removed after a few hours. Thus, JeM in general is quite active on Facebook.

The LeT also gradually moved on to the online platform. However, it was good at releasing recordings of its trainings in the form of video cassette players. LeT is said to maintain more prominence on Twitter as compared to Facebook. The AuT is the first terrorist organisation to be officially affiliated to the ISIS. Having been formed as a result of the internal rift within Indian Mujahideen, it has tried to maintain presence on Skype, WeChat and JustPaste.it.

However, the ISIS has emerged as the most tech-savvy jihadist group. According to cybersecurity experts, ISIS supporters have adopted several counter-measures to try to compensate for the repeated suspension of their accounts. These include methods to make it easier to generate new accounts and ways to find other suspended users. They follow reverse shoutouts techniques to revive their accounts. There is an account called the Baqiya Shoutout, which has been helping ISIS supporters in re-establishing their accounts after suspension.[64] One document, attributed to the Baqiya Shoutout user, provided step-by-step instructions for what was described as a 'reverse shoutout', essentially steps to encourage other users to share information about a new account. Baqiya Shoutout explained that the focus should not be on how easily individual users come back with a new account, but on how efficiently they are able to re-establish their network of followers. Within the document, the users were told to:

1. Use a disposable email to create their new account.
2. Try not to follow random suggested accounts provided by Twitter, as following these suggestions could provide clues to their location.
3. Follow trusted accounts with a large number of followers and accounts specifically devoted to shoutouts.

A significant number of bots have been observed providing automated shoutouts in Arabic, but these were less prevalent in English.

Also, ISIS leadership had been asking its members to follow strict guidelines and security measures to maintain anonymity.[65] Users have been asked not to turn on their Global Positioning System (GPS) locations and use virtual private network (VPN). Previously, Twitter users who created accounts from outside of the US were permitted to do so without providing a verified email or phone number. The ISIS supporters were instructed to download Hola VPN or a similar programme for use from a mobile device or Web browser. Once installed, users could select an Internet Protocol (IP) address for a country outside the US, and thus bypass email or phone verification.[66]

Conclusion

In the wake of the ongoing threat of violent extremism and radicalisation in the subcontinent, there is a clear need for India to develop effective indigenous counter-radicalisation programmes and evolve strategic communications to disseminate political, liberal, religious and socially resonant and effective counter-narratives to combat the spread of jihadist radicalisation. Specialised task forces and research wings in think tanks and relevant government departments have to be developed, as well as competent personnel and facilities have to be groomed for implementing the programmes in prisons, seminaries, schools, colleges, etc., as far as possible. Meanwhile, civil society needs to be engaged in playing its crucial role in fighting the growing threat of radicalisation in the region. Its role could prove to be critical for governments in law enforcement, citizenship teaching, inter-faith dialogue, cohesion activities, language tuition, anti-discrimination projects, myth busting, inter-communal housing and integration policies, improving educational attainment and mentoring and developing role models.

Again, India, in cooperation with the international community, would have to develop appropriate and effective legislation and processes to bring extremist organisations of all denominations to the book, including those that spread hate, even if they do not openly engage in violent activities. Such organisations often function as fronts or breeding grounds for raising radical cadres. It is also recommended that instances of communal clashes and violence should not be taken lightly or dismissed as rare occurrences in our multi-religious, sectarian, casteist and ethnically diverse society. Serious thought must also be given to preventing a climate of mistrust, in times when transnational non-state actors are increasing their seditious activities in the country.

There is also room for improvement in public perception regarding fairness and impartiality of security agencies and the judicial system in countries of the region. When members of the public or any community start losing faith in any country's law enforcement agencies, the risk of radicalisation increases and some of its members start attacking state institutions itself and join foreign extremist groups.

Perhaps various religions and their impact on society should be studied as a secular academic discipline in various universities of South Asia, so that false religious indoctrination of foreign extremist groups through the Internet can be countered in a precise, scientific manner and authorities may not have to depend on biased, opinionated and poorly educated religious scholars to frame the country's counter-narratives and deradicalisation policies.

The importance of developing a strong counter-radicalisation presence in the cyber world can also not be understated, particularly in the country's regional languages in which the ISIS and al-Qaeda are gradually spreading their message.

In the end, there is a need to revitalise India's and the region's socio-cultural ethos, wherein countries should not just represent political unions but should emerge as organic, composite entities. In the absence of a strong social fabric and common cultural ethos, security measures can never prove sufficiently resilient against the threat of extremism and terrorism.

NOTES

1. The term 'jihadism' in this article is distinct from the Islamic term 'jihad'. 'Jihadism' is a neologism used by most strategic experts to describe military movements that claim to be 'rooted in Islam' even as they practise terrorism and 'existentially threaten' the modern international order.

2. Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014.

3. United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 'India', in *2016 Annual Report*, 2016, available at http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRF%202016%20Annual%20Report.pdf, accessed on 24 March 2018.

4. Randy Borum, 'Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories', *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2011, p. 4.

5. HM Government, *Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare: The United Kingdom's*

Strategy for Countering International Terrorism, March 2009, para 0.13, available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228644/7547.pdf, accessed on 31 March 2018.

6. PET, "Radikalisering og terror," Center for Terror Analyse (Denmark), October 2009.

7. Ashok Swain, 'The Tipping Point for Indian Muslims is Not Far Away', *DailyO.in*, 15 February 2017, available at https://www.dailyo.in/politics/india-muslims-islamic-radicalism-islamophobia/story/1/15677.html, accessed on 1 April 2018.

8. Rajiv Kumar and Santosh Kumar, *In the National Interest: A Strategic Foreign Policy for India*, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi: Business Standard Books, 2010.

9. Tufail Ahmad, 'The Radicalisation Series: Analysing the Threat to Muslim Youths in India', *Firstpost*, 25 August 2016, available at http://www.firstpost.com/india/the-radicalisation-series-analysing-the-threat-to-muslim-youths-in-india-2969838.html, accessed on 2 April 2018.

10. Ibid.

11. Yasmin M. Khan, 'The Madrassa Series: How Deoband became Shorthand for Extremism and Violent Intolerance Entered its Ideology', *Firstpost*, 26 February 2016, available at https://www.firstpost.com/india/the-madrassa-series-how-deoband-became-shorthand-for-extremism-and-violent-intolerance-entered-its-ideology-2638314.html, accessed on 20 March 2018.

12. Ibid.

13. 'Sachar Committee Report: High Level Committee to Examine the Socio-economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community in India', *PRS Legislative Research*, 2006, available at http://www.prsindia.org/parliamenttrack/report-summaries/sachar-committee-report-high-level-committee-to-examine-the-socio-economic-and-educational-status-of-the-muslim-community-in-india-660/, accessed on 21 March 2018.

14. 'Post Sachar Evaluation Committee', 29 September 2014, available at http://iosworld.org/download/Post_Sachar_Evaluation_Committee.pdf, accessed on 22 March 2018.

15. William Shakespeare. *Hamlet,* Act III, Scene 1, (l. 73-75).

16. 'No Proof of IS Link in Lucknow Encounter, Terror Suspect Saifullah Self-radicalised: Police', *Hindustan Times*, 8 March 2017, available at https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/madhya-pradesh-train-blast-police-yet-to-procure-proof-of-terrorist-s-affiliation-to-islamic-state/story-kYBRXFe9RyGOprdzjIr2DJ.html, accessed on 24 March 2018.

17. 'ISIS Module in Ujjain Train Blast Made Failed Bid to Bomb PM's Rally: NIA', *Business Standard*, 30 March 2017, available at http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/isis-module-in-ujjain-train-blast-made-failed-bid-to-bomb-pm-s-rally-nia-117033000590_1.html, accessed on 31 March 2018.

18. C. McCauley, 'Jujitsu Politics: Terrorism and Response to Terrorism', in P.R. Kimmel and Chris Stout (eds), *Collateral Damage: The Psychological Consequences of America's War on Terrorism*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006.

19. John Coakley, *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 153.

20 C. Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*, translated by J. Butt and R. Sheed, Havana: Transcontinental Press, 1969, accessed on 30 March 2018.

21. 'Pan Islamism and Radicalisation of Kashmiri Youth', *EFSAS*, available at https://www.efsas.org/Pan-Islamism%20and%20Radicalization%20of%20Kashmiri%20Youth.pdf, accessed on 25 March 2018.

22. Ibid.

23. Adil Rasheed, 'The New Transnational Jihadi', *New Age Islam*, 13 August 2015. http://www.newageislam.com/current-affairs/the-new-transnational-jihadi-from-india/d/104252, accessed on 3 April 2018.

24. List of Salafi jihadist texts used for radicalising young minds is as follows: *Al-Ahkam Al-Sultaniya* (Text for Islamist Polity and Administration) by tenth century theologian Abul Hasan al-Mawardi; several texts on *takfiri* doctrines written by Ibn Taimiyyah and Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab; revolutionary jihadist literature by Syed Qutb, mainly *Milestones (Ma'alim fi al-Tariq)*; books on jihad doctrine and warfare by Ibn Nuhaas; Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*; Abu Bakr Naji's *Management of Savagery* and *The Economic System of Islam*; and his ideology of the need to reinstate the caliphate by Taqiuddin Nabhani. Most of these books are banned from publication but are illegally available on the Dark Web.

25. 'ISIS: New Call for Lone Wolf Attacks', *The New Observer*, 6 October 2016, available at http://newobserveronline.com/isis-new-call-lone-wolf-attacks/; and Jenny Awford, 'ISIS Step-by-Step Guide Teaches Lone-Wolf Terrorists How to Use Lorries to "Crush Victims" in Berlin and Nice-style Massacres', *The Sun*, 21 December 2016, available at https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2449704/isis-step-by-step-guide-teaches-lone-wolf-terrorists-how-to-use-lorries-to-crush-victims-in-berlin-and-nice-style-massacres/, accessed on 31 March 2018.

26. 'Al-Qaeda Chief Zawahiri Launches al-Qaeda in South Asia', *BBC News*, 4 September 2014, available at http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-29056668, accessed on 18 March 2018.

27. Alistair Reed, 'Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent: A New Frontline in the Global Jihadist Movement?', International Centre for Counter Terrorism, The Hague, May 2015, available at https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ICCT-Reed-Al-Qaeda-in-the-Indian-Subcontinent-May2016.pdf, accessed on 20 March 2018.

28. A. Basit, 'Asim Umar—"New Kid on the Block"?', *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis*, Vol. 6, No. 10, 2014, available at https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CTTANovember14.pdf, accessed on 21 March 2018.

29. J. Olmstead, 'The Real Reason al-Qaeda is Establishing an India Branch', *The Diplomat*, 23 September 2014, available at http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/the-real-reason-al-qaeda-is-establishing-an-indiabranch/, accessed on 24 March 2018.

30. T. Joscelyn, 'Analysis: Al Qaeda's "Resurgence" Focuses on Indian Subcontinent', *The Long War Journal*, 23 October 2014. https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/10/al_qaedas_resurgence-2.php, accessed on 27 March 2018.

31. 'AQIS Code of Conduct', June 2017, available at https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/al-qacc84_idah-in-the-indian-subcontinent-22code-of-conduct22-en.pdf, accessed on 28 March 2018.

32. Abhinav Tripathi, 'It's official: Al-Qaeda Announces Kashmir Unit, Zakir Musa is the Leader', *The Economic Times*, 27 July 2017, available at https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/59790965.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst, accessed on 26 March 2018.

33. 'Zakir Musa again Threatens Separatist Leaders', *The Asian Age*, 22 February 2018, available at http://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/220218/zakir-musa-again-threatens-separatist-leaders.html, accessed on 24 March 2018.

34. 'Dinamalar Receives Threat Letter', *The Hindu*, 28 January 2015.

35. 'French Consulate Receives Threat Letter against Hollande's Republic Day Visit', *DNA*, 21 January 2016.

36. Prabhash K. Dutta, 'Base Movement: This New Terror Outfit Targets Courts with Bombs', *India Today*, 7 November 2016, available at https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/base-movement-al-ummah-chittoor-nellore-malappuram-kollam-mysuru-court-bomb-blasts-350657-2016-11-07, accessed on 3 March 2018.

37. Animesh Roul, 'Al-Qaeda's Quiet Resurgence in India', *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 15, No. 16, 15 August 2017, available at https://jamestown.org/program/al-qaedas-quiet-resurgence-in-india/, accessed on 24 March 2018.

38. Zahir Shah Sherazi, 'Six Top TTP Commanders Announce Allegiance to

Islamic State's Baghdadi', *Dawn*, 14 October 2014, available at http://www. dawn.com/news/1137908, accessed on 24 March 2018.

39. Vicky Nanjappa, 'Breakaway IM Group Ansar-ul-Tawhid Wakes Up to ISIS Call', *OneIndia*, 21 January 2016, available at http://www.oneindia.com/ india/ansar-ul-tawhid-wakes-up-to-the-isis-call-1989347.html, accessed on 31 March 2018.

40. Sudhir Ranjan Sen and Suparna Singh, 'Experts Decode Chat of Riyaz Bhatkal, among India's Most Wanted', *NDTV*, 8 November 2014, available at http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/experts-decode-chats-of-riyaz- bhatkal-among-indias-most-wanted-690236, accessed on 31 March 2018.

41. 'Pictured: The Grinning ISIS Terrorists Who Hacked 20 Innocent Victims', *Mail Online*, 4 July 2016, available at http://www.dailymail. co.uk/news/article-3671586/Pictured-grinning-ISIS-terrorists-hacked- 20-innocent-victims-including-westerners-death-spared-recite-Koran- Bangladesh-attack.html#ixzz4X8tGRdN3, accessed on 1 April 2018.

42. Serajul Qadir and Ruma Paul, 'Islamist Militants Kill 20 in Bangladesh before Commandos End Siege', *Reuters*, 1 July 2016, available at https://www. reuters.com/article/us-bangladesh-attack/islamist-militants-kill-20-in- bangladesh-before-commandos-end-siege-idUSKCN0ZH5HE, accessed on 29 March 2018.

43. Saad Hammadi in Dhaka and John Boone in Islamabad, 'Bangladeshi militants launch fatal attack on Eid gathering', *The Guardian*, 7 July 2016, available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/07/bangladesh- militants-exchange-fire-with-police-at-eid-prayers, accessed on 2 April 2018.

44. Vicky Nanjappa, 'Shaykh Abu Ibrahim Al-Hanif: Did he Mastermind the Dhaka Attack?', *OneIndia*, 2 July 2016, available at http://www.oneindia. com/international/shaykh-bu-ibrahim-al-hanif-did-he-mastermind-the- dhaka-attack-2143229.html, accessed on 2 April 2018.

45. Chaitanya Mallapur, '103 Indians Suspected of being ISIS Sympathisers Arrested, "Very Few" have Joined', *India Spend*, 26 December 2017, available at http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/103-indians-suspected-of- being-isis-sympathisers-arrested-very-few-have-joined-73290, accessed on 21 March 2018.

46. Ibid.

47. 'Thane Youth with ISIS Links Arrested, Grilled by NIA', *India Today*, 29 November 2014, available at https://www.indiatoday.in/india/north/ story/kalyan-youth-arif-majeed-with-isis-links-arrested-grilled-by- nia-229067-2014-11-29, accessed on 23 March 2018.

48. Rajiv Kalkod, 'I am a Soldier, I have No Regrets, Says ISIS Twitter Handler

Mehdi Masroor Biswas', *The Times of India*, 19 December 2014, available at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Im-a-soldier-I-have-no-regrets-says-ISIS-Twitter-handler-Mehdi-Masroor-Biswas/articleshow/45567376.cms; and Natalie Tecimer, 'India and the Fight against Islamic State', *The Diplomat*, 14 June 2017, available at https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/india-and-the-fight-against-islamic-state/, accessed 22 March 2018.

49. Srinivas Janyala, Praveen Swamy and Deeptiman Tiwari, 'NIA Arrests Five in Hyderabad, Says Islamic State Attacks', *The Indian Express*, 30 June 2016, available at http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/islamic-state-nia-hyderabad-terror-module-isis-terrorism-2884665/, accessed on 24 March 2018.

50. Tecimer, 'India and the Fight against Islamic State', n. 48.

51. 'NIA Lodges Case against Five "ISIS Sympathisers" from Kerala', *The Times of India*, 17 December 2017, available at https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/nia-lodges-case-against-five-isis-sympathisers-from-kerala/articleshow/62106290.cms, accessed on 25 March 2018.

52. 'Brain behind Recruitment of Kasargod ISIS Hopefuls Booked by NIA', *The New Indian Express*, 27 January 2018, available at http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2017/jan/27/brain-behind-recruitment-of-kasargod-isis-hopefuls-booked-by-nia-1564175.html, accessed on 20 March 2018.

53. Vijaita Singh, 'Crackdown on Terror Suspects: Shafi Armar Scouted for Recruiters on FB', *The Hindu*, 23 January 2016, available at http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Crackdown-on-terror-suspects-Shafi-Armar-scouted-for-recruits-on-FB/article14015909.ece, accessed on 23 March 2018.

54. Ibid.

55. Praveen Swami, 'Islamic State Threatens to Expand to Kashmir', *The Indian Express*, 3 February 2016, available at http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/islamic-state-threatens-to-expand-to-kashmir/, accessed on 22 March 2018.

56. 'IS Claims Zakura Attack', *The Tribune* (India), 20 November 2017, available at http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/is-claims-zakura-attack/500289.html, accessed on 20 March 2018.

57. 'Kashmiri Group Pledges Allegiance to Islamic State', *BBC Urdu*, 26 December 2017.

58. Jeremy White, 'Virtual Indoctrination and the Digihad: The Evolution of Al-Qaeda's Media Strategy', *Small Wars Journal*, 19 November 2012, available at http://smallwarsjournal.com/printpdf/13534, accessed on 22 March 2018.

59. Ines Von Behr, Anaïs Reding, Charlie Edwards and Luke Gribbon, 'Radicalization in the Digital Era: The Use of the Internet in 15 Cases of Terrorism and Extremism', *Rand Europe*, 2013, available at https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR400/RR453/RAND_RR453.pdf, accessed on 25 March 2018.

60. Michael Safi, 'WhatsApp Warriors on the New Frontline of Kashmir's Conflict', *The Guardian*, 8 July 2017, available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/08/kashmir-whatsapp-warriors-frontline-conflict-india, accessed on 2 April 2018.

61. 'Burhan Wani: "Facebook Militant", "Indian Agent" and now Hero for Separatist Cause', *Business Standard*, 12 July 2017, available at http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/burhan-wani-facebook-militant-indian-agent-and-now-hero-for-separatist-cause-116071200153_1.html, accessed on 24 March 2018.

62. 'Google Earth Accused of Aiding Mumbai Terror Attacks', *Fox News*, 10 December 2008, available at http://www.foxnews.com/story/2008/12/10/google-earth-accused-aiding-mumbai-terror-attacks.html, accessed on 21 March 2018.

63. Author's interview with Neha Vijay, Senior Security Consultant at Kawach Media and Databases, New Delhi on 6 June 2017.

64. Natasha Lomas, 'Study of ISIS Extremists on Twitter Suggests Repeat Account Suspensions do Take a Toll', *Tech Crunch*, 19 February 2016, available at https://techcrunch.com/2016/02/19/study-of-isis-extremists-on-twitter-suggests-repeat-account-suspensions-do-take-a-toll/, accessed on 21 March 2018.

65. Eric Shmitt and Ben Hubbard, 'ISIS Leader takes Steps to Ensure Group's Survival', *The New York Times*, 20 July 2015, available at https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/21/world/middleeast/isis-strategies-include-lines-of-succession-and-deadly-ring-tones.html, accessed on 31 March 2018.

66. Madhumita Murgia, 'Islamic State Issues Anti-hacking Guidelines', *The Telegraph*, 17 November 2015, available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/internet-security/12001420/Islamic-State-issues-anti-hacking-guidelines-after-Anonymous-threats.html, accessed on 23 March 2018.