



Asian Conflicts Reports

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Nationalism and the Thai-Cambodian Border Conflict

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On 4 February 2011, heavy fighting broke out between the Thai and Cambodian armies along their disputed border near the ancient temple complex of Preah Vihear. Battles continued for four days, resulting in at least eight deaths, over 30 injuries and forcing the evacuation of some 15,000 villagers. It was the heaviest and longest fighting between the two countries since hostilities broke out in July 2008 after Cambodia's bid to have the temple listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site was granted. The fighting also coincided with protests in Bangkok by the ultra-nationalist 'yellow-shirt' movement, which called on the government of Abhisit Vejjajiva to take a tougher stance on the border dispute with Cambodia. Not coincidentally, the yellow-shirts were also engaged in street protests in Bangkok when hostilities first broke out in July 2008 – underscoring the key role that Thai nationalism is playing in this conflict.

Preah Vihear (or Phrah Wihan as the Thais call it), was built by Khmer kings from the ninth to 12th centuries AD, when Khmer territory extended far into what is present-day Thailand. After the Thais sacked the Khmer empire in 1431, the temple complex was abandoned and virtually lost to history, having no political, cultural or geographical significance until the 20th century. The temple sits atop a jungle escarpment that today forms the natural boundary between Thailand and Cambodia, but the border has never been fully demarcated. However, a map drawn by the French in the early 1900s – and at the time recognized by Thailand (then known as Siam) – places the temple on the Cambodian side of the frontier, likely a non-issue at the time due to the Khmer heritage of the temple.

Following the withdrawal of French colonial forces from Cambodia in 1954, the temple became the center of a sovereignty dispute between Thailand and Cambodia, prompting Phnom Penh to take the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICJ ruled in 1962 that the temple belonged to Cambodia, but failed to rule on where the borderline lies in the temple's surrounding area (which remains the heart of the dispute today). In a radio address following the 1962 ruling, Thai Prime Minister Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat stated, "With blood and tears, we shall recover the Phrah Wihan one day."

"Almost fifty years on, the fire of nationalism has never really abated, and it has been periodically rekindled by various [Thai] political factions to serve their own political purposes," writes Thai academic Pavin Chachavalpongpun in a 2010 article entitled *Temple of Doom: Hysteria about the Preah Vihear Temple in the Thai Nationalist Discourse*. "Today, the Cambodians have come to fill the world of Thai nationalism."

The main group to exploit the Preah Vihear issue has been Thailand's 'yellow-shirt' movement, formally known as the People's Alliance for Democracy" (and a newly established fringe group called the Thai Patriots Network). Just over a month after the PAD began a massive street campaign in Bangkok in late May 2008 to try and topple the government of Samak Sundaravej (a close ally of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted in a military coup in 2006 with the help of PAD-led protests), UNESCO officially approved Cambodia's bid to have the Preah Vihear Temple listed as a World Heritage Site – a bid that had the full support of the Thai government. A joint communiqué between the Thai and Cambodian foreign ministers signed in May 2008 specified that only the temple precinct was to be designated – not its surrounding un-demarcated territory. Nevertheless, UNESCO's approval of Cambodia's bid infuriated the PAD (and indeed many Thais), and re-ignited widespread nationalist sentiment against Cambodia. In the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh, the listing sent thousands of people into the streets to celebrate, with Prime Minister Hun Sen calling the listing "a new source of pride for the people of Cambodia."

Shortly after the ruling in July 2008, three Thai nationalists – a woman, a man and a Buddhist monk, protested the listing by illegally crossing into Cambodia to plant a Thai flag on the temple grounds. The three were arrested by Cambodian soldiers, prompting several dozen Thai soldiers to cross the border, one of whom lost a leg to a landmine. The trio was released a few hours later, but the Thai soldiers remained. A tense stand-off pursued as both countries deployed troops and heavy weapons to the disputed border around Preah Vihear.

The dispute at the time gave momentum to the PAD as the group received an influx of support from ordinary Thais who felt betrayed by the UNESCO ruling and the government's handling of the issue (namely its support for Cambodia's bid).

1 Hostilities flared in the Thai-Cambodian border dispute over the Preah Vihear temple complex in February 2011

2 UNESCO's listing of the temple as a World Heritage Site has triggered anti-Cambodian sentiment among Thai nationalists

3 ASEAN-brokered peace talks look unlikely to lead to a permanent cease-fire



The PAD propagated that the UNESCO ruling ceded territory to Cambodia, which was completely false. Foreign Minister Noppadon Pattama became the first casualty of the crisis as he was forced to resign following a Constitutional Court ruling that his role in backing the Cambodian government's UNESCO application had violated the constitution.

As PAD protests escalated in October of that year, the first gun battles broke out between Thai and Cambodian soldiers around Preah Vihear. The Blood and tears stated in Sarit's nationalistic radio address nearly a half a century before had started to flow.

Like the flare-up in 2008, the recent battles at Preah Vihear ignited as yellow-shirt protesters took back to the streets of Bangkok, this time against their former ally – Abhisit and the Democrat party, which has led a coalition government since December 2008. Their primary demand was for Abhisit to take a tougher stance on Cambodia following a bizarre episode in which seven yellow-shirt supporters (including a Democrat MP) visited the disputed border and were arrested by Cambodian authorities in late December 2010. Five of them were released a few weeks later, but two were handed down lengthy prison sentences for illegal entry into Cambodia and espionage. Three days after the verdict, fighting erupted at Preah Vihear.

For four days, the Thai and Cambodian armies traded heavy gunfire including small arms, grenades, rockets and artillery. Both sides accused the other of instigating the fighting, which caused damage to the temple. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said the situation had escalated into a "war" with Thailand and called for international intervention. Thailand insisted on only bilateral negotiations to resolve the dispute, but then later in the month agreed to mediation by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). On 22 February, the two countries agreed to let Indonesia, the current chair of ASEAN, to deploy two teams of up to 20 military and civilian observers on both sides of the border to monitor the situation, as well as to allow ASEAN mediation of future negotiations on resolving the dispute.

Although the ASEAN-brokered arrangement has pulled both sides back from the brink of full war, it is unlikely the dispute will be resolved any time soon and further clashes between the two armies could resume at any time. Thailand's powerful yellow-shirts remain infuriated and are against any cease-fire agreement. The radical movement wants the Thai military to launch an invasion of Cambodia and even seize the much more famous Khmer temple complex of Angkor Wat – the symbol of Cambodian pride – in order to be in a better negotiating position over Phrea Vihear. While such a scenario will almost certainly never occur, the yellow-shirt movement wields significant influence in the upper echelons of the Thai military.

Nationalist sentiment in Cambodia has also been stoked over the dispute, while Prime Minister Hun Sen has certainly exploited the conflict to his advantage. Analysts say his aggressive posture towards the issue and his refusal to be pushed around by Thailand has boosted his popularity and has strengthened his power. Interestingly, the commander of Cambodian troops overseeing this latest round of fighting at Preah Vihear was Hun Sen's eldest son, Major-General Hun Manet. The 33-year-old West Point Graduate has rapidly moved up the ranks of the Cambodian military, a clear sign that Hun Sen is further consolidating his power. Some even see it as a potential dynasty in the making; comparisons have been made between the rise of Hun Manet and that of Kim Jong-un, the son of ailing North Korean leader Kim Jong-il who is expected to succeed his father in the world's only communist dynasty.

For Thailand, the Preah Vihear dispute is just one of many conflicts that have beset the country for over five years, leaving the country deeply and dangerously divided. For Cambodia, however, the Preah Vihear issue has united the country. "In Cambodia, nobody doubts whom the territory belongs to," says Chea Vannath, an independent Cambodian analyst. "There's no friction, no fragmentation, just one belief. Everyone in Cambodia knows that the territory belongs to Cambodia."

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Youth, Terrorism and the Internet

Thomas K. Samuel



1 Children and youth are increasingly vulnerable to radicalization and enlistment in violent ideological movements

2 The internet facilitates the identification and indoctrination of alienated youth

3 Governments must work with other stakeholders to forge proactive strategies for preventing internet radicalization

It is becoming clear that terrorist organizations are recruiting and influencing youths to carry their devastating acts. Sadly, many youths, irrespective of race, religion, education background or economic status have fallen prey to the rhetoric propagated by these groups.

The statistics are grim. Around 300,000 children, both boys and girls under the age of 18 are combatants fighting in almost 75 per cent of the world's conflicts. It is disheartening to note that 80 per cent of these conflicts where children are present also include fighters under the age of 15, and that approximately 40 per cent of the armed organizations in the world (157 of 366) use child soldiers.

The Mumbai attacks in 2008, which left 165 civilians and security personnel dead, were a series of ten coordinated attacks orchestrated by ten individuals. What was chilling was the common thread that bound them together – they were all young. Besides the eldest terrorist, Nazir/Abu Umer who was 28 years old, the average age of the other nine terrorists was only 23 years. The leader, Ismail Khan was just 25 years old.

In Iraq, a raid on an Al-Qaeda hideout in the Diyala Province, north of Baghdad in December 2008, uncovered evidence of a network of child suicide bombers who had been coerced into launching terrorist attacks. The use of children in Iraq was seen as a way to bypass security checks. In one case, in September 2008, a boy aged ten, stalked his target for three days, masquerading as a flower seller before blowing himself up and seriously injuring his target.

In the Philippines, Abdurajak Janjalani, the founder of the Abu Sayaf Group (ASG) was only in his 20's when he was influenced to join extremist activities, and only 26 when he formed the ASG. He died in a police encounter in 1998, but his younger brother, Khadaffy Janjalani was only 22 when he took over as the new *emir*. In 2009, the ASG was led by Yasser Igasan who was only 21 years old when he joined. Ahmad Santos, the founder of the *Rajah Solaiman Islamic Movement* (RSIM) was radicalised when he was 21 and founded the RSIM when he was only 29 years old. The RSIM is alleged to have conducted the SuperFerry 14 bombing on 27 February 2004, the worst maritime terrorist attack to date. It is significant to note that the alleged perpetrator of the act was Redento Cain Delloso, who was only in his mid-20 during the incident.

The reality is that while terrorist groups have extensive hard power, they also have considerable soft power. In turbulent times these groups attract youths by exploiting their vulnerabilities and providing them with a sense of identity, belonging and cohesiveness. Over a period of time the youth begins to define their identity with that of the group and life apart from the group no longer seems possible.

There is no one definite reason why youth are attracted to terrorist organizations. But various attractive factors include acquiring a skill, increasing the sense of empowerment, purpose, self-importance and control, a tangible sense of acceptance, a certain status in the community and a perceived sense of future reward. The community also plays an important role in the development and nurture of a young terrorist. When there are few opportunities to break out of the cycle of poverty, perceived/real injustice and despair, there is a greater tolerance for violence.

Why do terrorist target the youth? At the macro level, not only are youth easier to manipulate and indoctrinate but there is the potential of a seemingly endless supply. At the micro level, youths with no prior police records (or 'clean skins' as the Real IRA called them) allow the terrorist group more operational freedom as their involvement would reduce the likelihood of arrest of the more senior terrorist leaders. Youths are also at times given more dangerous tasks on the assumption that if they are caught they would receive lighter sentences due to their age.

Prison, ironically provides a conducive environment for terrorist recruitment among the juvenile population. Terror detainees who are not physically separated from other criminals, and in particular the younger offenders, have used the time and space given by incarceration to both recruit and indoctrinate potential youths into their groups. The youths in those circumstances are vulnerable and the support structure of family and friends is often supplanted by these groups.

Religious institutions, preaching a skewed and misconstrued interpretation of a faith have the potential to capture the hearts, minds and imaginations of the young people. Coupled with the actual and perceived injustices happening all around the world, these 'men of God' clinically exploit the minds and hearts of the youths into thinking that the only alternative left is that of violence. Having the advantage of 'god' on their side, these youths are manipulated into believing that they are actually struggling for a noble and worthy cause, with the assurance of victory.



Universities and institutions of higher learning are also being turned into recruiting pools for terrorists. Foreign students and lecturers from countries that are in conflict utilize lecture sessions to vividly describe the atrocities and injustices occurring in their respective countries and over a period of time mould their students into thinking that the 'propaganda of the deed' is the only recourse left. This problem is further compounded by local students going abroad to study, but instead being indoctrinated and radicalized.

Lastly, the internet has been essential for terrorists in finding ways to disseminate and attract new young recruits. The natural inclination of the current generation of young people to gravitate towards the internet has been well anticipated and exploited by terrorist groups. This is well illustrated by the Taliban, who in the past punished people who owned television sets, but are now actively updating their websites numerous times a day.

Hence, we see a transition from physical space to cyberspace. Terrorist's skilful ability to creatively utilize the internet has enabled them to exponentially increase their potential reach. In December 2007, the *as-Sahab* media service announced that Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al-Qaeda's number-two, would entertain questions from the general public posted on selected militant websites. His offer elicited more than 900 entries and in April 2008, Zawahiri responded to these queries in an audio statement accompanied with English and Arabic transcripts.

The late leader of the Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi's strategy of videotaping the carnage in Iraq and then disseminating it as broadly as possible has been greatly enhanced with the advent of YouTube and blogs. There are also those who have defined the conflict in Iraq as the first 'YouTube war', given the extensive use of this social networking site to graphically publicize the conflict. The internet has also showed great potential in becoming the focal meeting point for terrorists all across the globe and has been said to be the next Afghanistan, but with social networking sites replacing the battlefield as the venue for radicalized youths to link-up and to fight for a common cause.

Given this development, we can understand how young people have been radicalized through the internet without ever having to physically meet other fellow terrorists. In Singapore, a 20-year-old national serviceman, Muhammad Fadi Abdul Hamid was arrested under the Internal Security Act for having contacted Anwar al-Awlaki, the radical United States born preacher, and expressing interest in joining a militant movement operating in the Palestine territories, Iraq and Afghanistan. Awlaki, known as the 'Bin Laden of the Internet' has been said to have made numerous contacts with groups and individuals in the region and is also said to have inspired US Army Major Nidal Hasan who killed 13 at Fort Hood in Texas in 2009. He was also reportedly in touch with two of the 9/11 hijackers and has been linked with Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who attempted the Christmas Day bombings in 2009. It is pertinent to note that Awlaki's global reach as seen in the cases above, has been solely due to the internet.

While in the past, terrorists have used the internet as the means to disseminate their rhetoric of hate, we now see that the internet has extended its potential to include the actual identifying, nurturing and developing of a raw recruit into a fully-fledged terrorist. Hence, internet radicalization has been utilized as a means of self-radicalization. This 'computer screen to battlefield process,' poses a grave threat and requires a paradigm shift in our efforts to counter terrorism. Any delay or hesitance in equipping enforcement authorities with the skill, technical know-how and ability to counter this growing threat would be highly dangerous.

It is quite possible, that the next battlefield in the struggle against terrorism will not take place in a physical plane but in the mental and emotional sphere of the youth. Unless, we win the hearts and minds of these young people, not only will we not garner their support but we face the distinct possibility of facing them as our adversaries.

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Southeast Asia's Energy Transit States

Allison Casey



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Asian reliance on Mid-East oil makes the littoral transit states the “maritime heart of Asia”

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Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia have different stakes in Malacca Strait security

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Energy security in Asia will require forging “coincidence of interests” among the littoral states

The point is often made that East Asia's increasing reliance on Middle Eastern oil will have significant impacts for energy security in the future. Yet this tends to overshadow another important consideration: the posture of littoral countries in Southeast Asia, which sit adjacent to the Malacca Strait. In particular, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia can be referred to as ‘energy transit states’ with strategic roles in transregional oil supply chains. These states’ shared geographic proximity does not mean that their roles are identical. Rather, it is interesting how much their standpoints vary in relation to the oil flow. Given that Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia are the primary security providers in the Malacca Strait, it is worthwhile considering how their stake in Middle East-East Asia energy shipments offers insight for understanding regional maritime security politics.

The Malacca Strait functions as a commercial trading link between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. With some 70,000 ships passing through the sea lane each year, transporting one-third of the world's trade and 80 per cent of Japan's, China's and South Korea's crude oil and refined petroleum imports, it is understandable why the Malacca Strait is so often referred to as a ‘shipping chokepoint.’

Many user states worry about the waterway. Japan has long provided assistance in maintaining navigational safety in the Strait through the Nippon Foundation. China seeks to manage its ‘Malacca Dilemma’ that arises from its dependence on Middle Eastern oil. The US has broad interests in ensuring that the Strait remains open for reasons related to trade, its existing strategic presence in the Pacific and China's ongoing naval modernization. Heightened security concerns in the aftermath of 9/11 prompted a range of initiatives addressing the maritime domain to be established, many of which have focused on potential non-traditional threats in the Malacca Strait, such as piracy, maritime terrorism and transnational organized crime. These efforts have included broad statements of recognition by regional multilateral organizations at Track I and Track II levels, US-led initiatives such as the Container Security Initiative (CSI) and the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) addition of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) to the 1974 Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention. In 2004, in response to a suggestion made by Commander of the US Pacific Command Admiral Thomas Fargo for a Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI), Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia – which use the Malacca Strait for its marine resources and for domestic, intraregional and transregional trade – established trilateral coordinated naval patrols known as MALSINDO, which Thailand also later joined.

These avenues of cooperation, and others, are usually justified on the grounds of user states’ shared (or ‘common’) interests. But while the quantities of oil shipped through the Malacca Strait to East Asia are expected to increase, it is unclear whether this reasoning holds in the case of Southeast Asia. Given Robert Kaplan's prediction that the littoral states are to become the ‘maritime heart of Asia,’ and Michael T. Klare's suggestion that the world faces a ‘new geography of conflict’ based on states’ competition for access to finite natural resources, the positions of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia as ‘energy transit states’ astride this Middle East-East Asia oil flow need to be examined.

Singapore is a leading hub in maritime logistics and energy sectors. As well as being one of the world's largest ports, Singapore is a major oil refiner, petrochemical manufacturer, bunker provider and trading centre in the Asia-Pacific. These business activities are significant revenue generators for the city-state's economy. In 2009, petroleum and related products represented one-third of Singapore's GDP. After electronics, petroleum refining is by value Singapore's second-largest manufacturing industry.

Yet with a total land area of only 700 square kilometers, Singapore is a quintessential resource-poor state. With no domestic oil reserves, it is completely reliant on imports to maintain its hub position. As Ong Eng Tong has observed, since most of Singapore's refineries were built in the 1960s and 1970s – prior to, and during, the oil crises of the 1970s which prompted major oil consumers throughout the world to diversify their suppliers outside of OPEC- its refineries were designed to process Middle Eastern crudes. As such, alternative oils cannot be easily substituted. While there are often efforts to expand Singapore's refining ‘crude slate,’ it remains a costly task. As an energy transit state then, Singapore is integrated in the shipments of oil that transit the Malacca Strait.



In contrast, despite its long coastal exposure to the sea lane, Indonesia has a far lower stake in the Middle East-East Asia oil flow. Indonesia's major refineries are not located near the Malacca Strait but at Cilacap in Java and at Balikpapan in Kalimantan. Though state-owned Pertamina processes Sumatra's substantial reserves at Dumai and Plaju, the combined daily output of 303,700 barrels of oil is dwarfed by ExxonMobil's refinery in Singapore, which produces 605,000 barrels each day. Similarly, where the Port of Singapore and Malaysia's Port Klang lie adjacent to the Malacca Strait, Indonesia's largest port, Jakarta's Tanjung Priok, is located far from the waterway.

Indonesian interests in oil are instead grounded in managing its domestic petroleum production, which has become increasingly challenging since Jakarta suspended its OPEC membership in January 2009. Since becoming a net oil importer Indonesia has fulfilled its oil needs from within Asia, and not from the Persian Gulf. Indeed, despite being the only state in Asia to ever hold OPEC membership, Indonesia's contributions to the cartel have been minimal at best. Its oil exports, for example, never represented more than 8 per cent of OPEC members' combined exports (which was in 1984. In 2008 it was 1.21 per cent). Given also that the Indonesian archipelago consists of many other major sea routes including the Sunda Strait, the Lombok-Makassar Strait and the Ombai-Wetar Strait – all which have their own importance for shipping – the passage of oil through the Malacca Strait is not necessarily a priority for Indonesia.

Malaysia's role as an energy transit state shares characteristics of both Singapore's dependence on, and Indonesia's minimal stake in, seaborne oil supplies destined for East Asia. Like its two neighbors, oil is prominent in the Malaysian economy. A regular of *Fortune's* Global 500, national energy company Petronas operates in over 30 countries and according to EIA estimates, generated almost half of the government's revenue in 2009.

Similar to Singapore, Malaysia's major ports, Port Klang and Johor's Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP), lie close to the Malacca Strait. Many of Malaysia's major refineries that are situated near the sea lane rely on Middle Eastern oil too, as its producing oilfields are located offshore from the Malaysian Peninsula and Borneo, towards the South China Sea. For example, two-thirds of what Petronas's PSR-2 refinery in Melaka was designed to handle are Middle Eastern blends. Qatar's Gulf Petroleum's and Malaysia's Merapoh Resources' planned refineries in Perak and Kedah respectively are intended to process Gulf oils for export. The expansion of infrastructure at PTP and the nearby development of an Asian Petroleum Hub on reclaimed island Tanjung Bin suggests that Malaysia's stake in oil supplies to East Asia is growing, especially given estimations that Malaysia will become a net oil importer within the next few years.

But as with Indonesia, Malaysia is by no means reliant on the Middle East for oil, since most imports are obtained from its immediate region. Although Petronas's many international projects provide Kuala Lumpur with revenue, Malaysia's domestically produced oil by value represented less than 9 per cent of Malaysia's total exports in 2010. As such, as an energy transit state, transnational oil shipments destined for East Asia have a notable but not all-encompassing importance for Malaysia.

Despite sharing the same geographical proximity to the Malacca Strait, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia have vastly different stakes in the waterway with regards to Middle East-East Asia oil shipments. While this transregional oil flow is significant for Singapore as a maritime logistics and oil hub, it less so for Malaysia, and has little importance for Indonesia. In this context it is unlikely that the three littoral states share the same outlook on sea lane security in their strategic policy making. Indeed, there are indications this is the case. For example, in response to Fargo's suggestion for the RMSI, while Singapore was initially supportive of US participation in Malacca Strait security patrols – and being a resource-poor country, this would have eased its own costs in providing for security in the sea lane – both Indonesia and Malaysia rejected the notion of a US military presence in the Strait on the grounds that it would violate their sovereignty. Instead, user states' contributions in Strait security initiatives have been limited to capacity building, equipment donation, training and financial assistance.

As such, with the RMSI experience in mind, the numerous existing efforts that aim to ensure security in the Malacca Strait are not necessarily based on 'common' interests as purported. Given that cooperation has occurred despite these three countries' differing stances, such efforts might be better described as a 'coincidence of interests' instead. With calls continuing to be made for increased international involvement in sharing the Southeast Asian maritime security burden, the geopolitics of oil is another factor increasing the dynamic complexity of what already is a challenging undertaking.



Social Networking, Politics and Filipino Youth – Post Egypt

Amparo Pamela H. Fabe

The internet and its ancillary tools have had a tremendous impact on the current political turmoil in the Middle East. In turn, these events have precipitated a higher level of political consciousness among Filipino youth, reinforced by their social networking habits. This political consciousness has been heightened by the youth's ability to access social networking sites. This has resulted in the political empowerment of the citizens and the establishment of a reliable feedback system. The unrest in Egypt was tweeted by young Filipinos. The Facebook pages of the Filipino youth featured videos of the events in Tahrir Square. Democracy and dictatorship were discussed.

This high level of political consciousness among the Filipino youth is due to their high level of engagement in social networking sites. Dr. Leonardo Garcia Jr., of the Lyceum University of the Philippines has found that 83 per cent of Filipino youth (approximately 47 million) are Facebook users. Another 45 per cent are active YouTube users (approximately 22 million). More than 50 per cent of these youth are of voting age. Universal McCann had declared the Philippines as the Social Networking Capital of the World. A Yahoo-Nielsen index study in 2009 cited frequent internet access among those in the 10-19 year age group. When typhoon "Ondoy" flooded the Manila area in 2009, social networking sites featured the impact and facilitated the government's search and rescue efforts. This social networking savvy segment of the Filipino youth is emerging as a very potent economic and political force.

Through the internet Filipino youth get to meet others they would never encounter in real life. They may not interact physically, but the interaction enriches them as they appreciate viewing the world from different perspectives. They are able to engage in international politics and social movements by having complete access to the global news.

This increased social capital and political consciousness is enhanced by the Filipino youth's access to information technology and social networking tools. For instance, the local grassroots mobile innovation started approximately ten years ago when mobile phone users in began trading in pay-as-you-go airtime for cash and using Short Messaging Service (SMS) to send credit to friends and family. This cell-phone credit transfer generated a massive consumer base, such that Globe and SMART communications decided to formalize this business process. Consumers were quick in adapting the 'mobile money' systems that were developed by local telecommunication networks such as the SMART and Globe.

Social networking sites and the SMS are aimed to address specific needs. Their usage has evolved into consumer usage. In most developing countries SMS was first primarily used for enabling financial access for the poor and 'unbanked'. Now consumers are shopping for products and services on their handhelds, buying iTunes, establishing their work calendars and photos, and updating their status on multiple social networking websites. The Pertierra youth survey (2003) revealed that women more than men are interested in exploiting social networking websites to establish personal relationships. Women generally do this to explore the possibilities of authentic relationships outside their local communities. The role of social networking and internet connectivity for arranging marital relationships for Filipinos has already begun. Furthermore, Pertierra (2004) stated that cell-phones have become integral to everyday social life for many Filipinos, replacing the jeepney automobile. Moreover, Pertierra also wrote that cell-phones have also become the contemporary primary signifier of Filipino modernity. The introduction of wi-fi enabled cellular phones has reinforced full internet connectivity for many Filipino consumers.

Dr. Grace T. Cruz, director of University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI), has conducted studies on the Filipino youth's lifestyle and behavior and stated that social media has revolutionized the way young people communicate and express themselves. It has widened their social circle at the expense of the quality of relationships forged. It is associated with superficial non-personal way of dealing with other people. A consumer survey of college students in Manila revealed that 90 per cent of 750 youth respondents indicated that they have set aside an increasing budget for monthly internet expense.

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Social networking is sparking heightened political consciousness in Filipino youth

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Mobile communications have become integral to daily economic and social life across the Philippines

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Filipinos are using social networking to hold politicians and officials accountable for their words and actions



Some societal organizations maximize the utilization of the internet facilities and social networking sites in terms of social capital accumulation. For example, Putnam's concept of social capital as the "stock" of "norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement" allows him to show how citizens overcome the classic textbook obstacles to collective action. His work contributes the causal arguments that are relevant and obvious: social capital as a potential cause of good governance and economic development, and social capital as the result of path-dependent historical legacies. Dr. Clarita Carlos, University of the Philippines, has stated that these are some of the lessons learned for political rulers – make your institutions work, free your people to express their ideas, give them the right of association, give them a right to compete for public office and don't stay too long in office.

The Egyptian influence on the Filipino youth's political consciousness shows a parallel impact on significant factors: political empowerment of citizens and a feedback system. Youth are confident that their voices are quickly and better heard in both society and in the international community through the posting, sharing and re-posting of features in these sites.

In Egypt, social networking sites influenced dramatic political events. This has already begun to occur in the Philippines on a smaller scale. A Filipino Undersecretary under the Office of the President caught the ire of social networking users after she posted negative and rude tweets during her stay in Vietnam as part of the official Philippine delegation for the ASEAN summit in October 2010. A Facebook page of "haters" of the official garnered five hundred members per day once it was uploaded. The website of the Office of the Philippine President received thousands of personal messages from young people condemning this official's negative tweets. The local official's father issued an official statement in a major newspaper of national circulation to apologize profusely. Many youth columnists condemned her action in online columns. Young Facebook users sent a strong message to the Aquino Administration that Vietnam is a respected and favored ally in the ASEAN.

Social networking sites also offer a convenient platform for the Filipino youth to show their appreciation and their dismay regarding the government's performance. For example, during the presidential inauguration of President Simeon Benigno Aquino, many of the young Facebook users posted a yellow ribbon (Aquino's campaign image) on their profile to convey their appreciation and happiness on his political victory. In contrast, the police incompetence surrounding the hostage-taking incident of Hong Kong tourists generated discussions on Facebook and online websites. The official website of the Philippine President had to contend with millions of private messages from local and overseas Filipinos condemning police incompetence. Some young Filipino prisoners in Bicutan National Prison, confined to their prison cells, have also been able to reach out to the public by utilizing these social networking sites. According to Professor Rommel Banlaoi of PIPVTR, many of the convicted prisoners in the national prison maintain a Facebook account. These prisoners post their photos and their writings on political issues. They evade police monitoring through the use of an alias.

Filipino youth also know that social networking sites offer them a massive and unrivalled public platform for their ideas and convictions on specific political issues being handled by their lawmakers in the legislative arena. The current discussion on the proposed Reproductive Health Bill resulted in the establishment of notes on Facebook and tweets expressing their personal stand against this bill, which was filed in the Philippine Congress.

Filipino youth now know and possess a better understanding of the power of the social networking sites to influence events and influence the chances of winning of a candidate. Youth social networking sites could positively enhance the political chances of a candidate. During the presidential elections in 2010, the presidential contenders opened and maintained Facebook and Twitter accounts. The presidential campaign teams posted their campaign stops all over the country. These candidates used Facebook sites to recruit youth volunteers for their respective political campaigns.

The political events in Egypt had serious ramifications for the political consciousness of young Filipinos. The political consciousness was heightened by the youth's ability to access social networking sites. This has resulted in the political empowerment of the citizens and the establishment of a reliable feedback system.

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The Battle against Al-Qaedaism

Mohd Feisal Mohd Hassan

Nine years after the catastrophic 9/11 attacks, the threat from religiously-motivated terrorist groups has not subsided. The resilience of the groups is due to several factors. First and foremost, the attractiveness of the ideology has gained sympathies and support across the globe. The ideology which sustained the pre-9/11 groups has also served to motivate new, emerging groups. *Al-Qaedaism* as an ideology continues to thrive. Misconstrued concepts are the backbone of the ideological narrative that Al-Qaeda has succeeded in introducing to Muslims in many parts of the world. Within the Al-Qaeda narrative, the term *Jihad* becomes the tool to engage in acts of violence and killings – perpetrators imagine heavenly gains as a reward for such acts. Such narrative also paints a black and white dichotomy between those in the right and those who are evil. Exclusivity to the right remains in the hands of the perpetrators of Al-Qaeda and the like. The combination of the term *al-Wala' wal Bara'* becomes the corresponding elements that distinguish those who are friends and thus warrant loyalty, and to those who will remain as enemies in their fight to establish their version of the Islamic *Daulah* (State). Such narratives have succeeded in conjuring up support and increasing sympathizers to Al Qaeda's cause. Representatives to such an ideology have thrived in maintaining their presence in many parts of the world. Their continuous existence is a reality today due to many factors including Al Qaeda's publishing their ideological justifications in many different languages through books and an obvious presence in the cyber world. Similarities in the ideological justification of their violent acts and killings, from groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) in Southeast Asia to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is proof of the proliferation of *Al-Qaedaism* as an ideology.

Second, family kinship plays a pivotal role in sustaining *Al-Qaedaism*. The evolution of religiously motivated terrorist groups in Indonesia is a classic example. The *Jemaah Ansar al-Tauhid* (JAT) which was formed by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the identified emir of the JI, is being run by his son Abdul Rohim. Other factors which contribute to the resilience of *Al-Qaedaism* include perceived grievances, a sense of injustice and repression, poverty and others. Amidst all this, what remains certain is that the ideology has been critical in justifying acts of violence and killings.

The emergence of self-radicalized individuals is another worrying development. The attractiveness of ideologues using English as a medium of indoctrination through social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube and online forums, among others, is a current reality that have pervaded the minds of the younger generation. Radicalized ideologues such as Anwar al-Awlaki have used the Internet fervently to attract the youth to subscribe to the ideology perpetrated by *Al-Qaedaism*. Major Nidal Malik Hassan, who was held responsible for the November 2009 Fort Hood shootings, and Omar Farouk Abdulmuttalab, who was arrested for attempting to blow up a US bound passenger aircraft on Christmas Day 2009, are radicalized individuals who believed in the message preached by Awlaki, and have acted upon those messages.

Radicalization in prison is also a cause for concern today. As an example, Aman Abdurrahman, the leader of *Jemaah al-Tauhid wal Jihad* in Indonesia, wrote voluminous translations of *al-Maqdisi's* work while in prison. Those translated works were published by publishing houses supported by such extreme groups, while Aman Abdurrahman was in prison. There are also reports of wardens and convicted criminals being radicalized in prisons from Europe to Southeast Asia.

Al-Qaedaism, self-radicalization, and prison radicalization are the three major challenges faced by governments today. All need to be understood and addressed accordingly. Many governments have stepped forward with a concerted strategic approach to minimize these threats. The key to implementing a counterterrorism strategy against violent and radical religiously-motivated violence is to inculcate a 'winning hearts and minds' approach in prevention, operations, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts. This multi-pronged approach is necessary to obliterate the three major challenges which have been identified.

In the prevention strategy, governments have a role in educating the public on the realities and dangers of such threats. Proactive programs which address the different stakeholders, including school children and youth, are crucial as a means to address radical issues being propagated in the cyber world. Building a cohesive political framework is necessary to conjure up unity for a nation to fight terrorism. The media also has a role in preventing radicalization. Mass media is an effective tool to educate the masses to apprehend any signs of radicalization.

1 Al-Qaedaism has become a "DIY" ideology easily adaptable to various cultural and social contexts

2 The dichotomous philosophy lends itself to self-radicalization and prison radicalization

3 Proactive programs are needed to inoculate vulnerable youth through education



Many countries today have given utmost importance to fighting terrorism in the operational sphere with a coordinated intelligence and policing strategy. Such hard approaches of ‘disruption, capture, and killing’ of terrorists and groups are necessary. Yet to defeat religiously-motivated violence today by only strategizing on the operational aspects of counterterrorism have its limitations.

Thus, many countries today from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, and Singapore are actively involved in rehabilitation works to challenge the ideology of *Al-Qaedaism*. These governments work closely with religious groups to defeat the spread of radical and extremist ideologies through religious counseling and dialogues. The creation of a specialized unit of *ulema* (religious scholars) and *asatizab* (religious teachers) with clear objectives and mechanisms in rehabilitating the detainees and their family members is crucial in the fight against radicalization and terrorism today. Prisons are transformed to allow space for the detainees to address their ideological justifications with relevant religious authorities to dispel their radical mindset. Collective partnership between governments and the religious scholars have contributed to minimizing the spread of radical and extremist ideologies within the prisons and amongst the masses. Many other elements of rehabilitation are currently being done in prisons and detention centers globally which include psychological rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, and art therapy.

Another important element in building up a strategic counterterrorism measure today is the creation of reintegration programs for released detainees, their spouses and children. These programs aim to curb the vicious cycle among the children and family members of the detainees. Collective efforts among the government with stakeholders in the community to ease the challenges faced by the detainee’s families have contributed in winning their hearts and minds to eradicate radical elements from their lives.

As such an ideology is rampantly expanding by trying to infest the minds of the young and others vulnerable and susceptible to it, a multi-pronged approach to winning the hearts and minds of those indoctrinated and shielding those masses from it is crucial. Such programs in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya, Singapore and others have released many numbers of the detainee population with an assurance of them being disengaged from the clutches of radicalism and terrorism. More importantly, governments in such countries have been able to create infrastructures and close working partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the creation of a collective united national effort against the spread of terrorism. As community plays an important role in defeating terrorism, such a multi-pronged approach of winning hearts and minds is crucial in acting as the vehicle and the modus operandi for the country to be resilient in this era of new terrorism.

However, many challenges are still being faced by governments all over the world in implementing such heart and minds approach in countering terrorism today. The lack of political will in realizing the threat and its spread, the failure to encourage the community to unite together, and the inability to minimize the sympathy and support to *Al-Qaedaism* are but some of the several challenges faced by governments today. Despite all these initiatives, the success of adopting multi-pronged strategic approaches to countering terrorism and the radical and extremist ideology it feeds on can only be determined over time. Many more efforts, research, and understanding are needed to encourage the winning hearts and minds approach to become a global imperative in the fight against terror. ●

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