Conclusion

Although many different factors account for AQI's resurgence in Iraq, the release of thousands of Iraqi detainees since 2008 could be one of the most significant. The withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraqi cities last summer has also offered AQI partisans new space to operate. After being temporarily defeated through the U.S. surge and its positive effects on security, AQI seems to have reconstituted itself within prisons. A number of released detainees are acknowledged to have re-radicalized during their detention, made contact with AQI, and been involved in several suicide attacks.

Consolidating the security improvements achieved in Iraq since 2007 and keeping AQI on the margin should be a priority for both the U.S. and Iraqi governments. In this regard, a number of concrete steps need to be taken. The legal framework that has allowed the release of dangerous jihadists, the amnesty law in particular, must be comprehensively assessed and amended so that no more protection is granted to them. Strengthening the rule of law and fighting against corruption are also fundamental to rebuilding functional institutions in Iraq. Eventually, within a prison system that offers an ideal environment for the dissemination of radical jihadist ideology, the monitoring of detainees must be reinforced and "irredentist" Islamists rigorously separated from moderate inmates who are more likely to be successfully rehabilitated.

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Developing Regional Counterterrorism Cooperation in South Asia

By Alistair Millar

U.S. PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA has set a new tone in the fight against terrorism, moving away from his predecessor's "global war on terrorism" into "a new era of engagement."[1] This shift in rhetoric is evident in the administration's approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan in a region where the United States and its NATO allies are embroiled in an extensive military campaign. When the administration's new "AFPAK" strategy was unveiled in March 2009, National Security Adviser General James Jones proclaimed that "the cornerstone of this strategy…is that it's a regional approach," adding that the administration "will pursue intensive regional diplomacy involving all key players in South Asia."[2]

Experts in the region agree that "there is a growing realization throughout the world that trans-border terrorism and organized crime cannot be controlled without bilateral or regional cooperation."[3] The 2008 attacks in Mumbai, where gunmen traveled by boat from Pakistan's port of Karachi to India, clearly highlighted the transnational dimension of the threat and the essential need for a regional approach to intelligence sharing, law enforcement and other forms of counterterrorism cooperation.[4] Yet pursuing a regional approach involving "all key players in South Asia" on any security related issue, let alone the extremely sensitive matter of fighting terrorism, is fraught with challenges.

This article will highlight some of these challenges by looking at the counterterrorism efforts of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It concludes by examining the prospects for developing a broad-based regional response to the threat of transnational terrorism by enhancing law enforcement cooperation on the subcontinent.

Many Agreements, Not Much Action

There has been no shortage of declarations explaining the need for greater collaboration among states in the region on issues related to border security, law enforcement, and mutual legal assistance. The primary regional organization in South Asia where peace and security issues are raised, SAARC, includes India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan in its membership[5] and has had the issue of terrorism on its agenda since well before the 9/11 attacks. More than 20 years ago, SAARC adopted a Regional Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism that called for cooperation among its member states on extradition, evidence sharing, and other information exchanges to address "terrorist acts." In 1995, SAARC also established a Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) to support the implementation of the convention by collecting, assessing, and disseminating information on terrorist offenses, tactics, strategies, and methods. Cooperation on combating terrorist financing was then included in an additional protocol to the convention in 2002, and a SAARC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance was approved at the 15th SAARC summit in August 2008.[6] The objective of the agreement is to overcome the need for separate bilateral agreements by harmonizing the domestic legal systems of member countries.[7] SAARC countries will hopefully find it easier to cooperate on counterterrorism investigations and the prosecution or extradition of terrorist suspects when the Convention enters into force. If past is prologue, however,

1 "Obama's Speech to the UN General Assembly," *New York Times*, September 23, 2009.

2 General James Jones, "President Obama's Afghanistan-Pakistan (AFPAK) Strategy," briefing to the Foreign Press Center, Washington, D.C., March 27, 2009.

3 V. Balachandran, "Insurgency, Terrorism and Transnational Crime in South Asia," in Amit Pandya and Ellen Laipson eds., *Transnational Trends: Middle East and Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, 2008).

4 Somini Sengupta "Dossier Gives Details of Mumbai Attacks," *New York Times,* January 6, 2009.

5 Since it was founded in 1985, SAARC's membership has included Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, with Afghanistan joining in 2005. China, Japan, the European Union, Republic of Korea, the United States, and Iran have observer status with SAARC.

6 Muralidhar Reddy and Sandeep Dikshithttp, "Legal Assistance Treaty Gets SAARC Approval," *Hindu,* August 3, 2008.

7 "SAARC Convention to Help in Combating Terrorism," Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN, press release, August 27, 2008.

the chances of member states agreeing on which individuals and groups should be the target of such cooperation are likely to be limited.

In April 2008, counterterrorism experts from SAARC countries decided to share intelligence for curbing terrorism and other transnational crimes.[8] Sharing intelligence on the subcontinent, however, has been complicated by concerns that connections between state intelligence services and terrorist organizations could allow sensitive information to be misused. Nonetheless, India and Pakistan did reach an agreement in April 2008 to exchange intelligence regarding recent attacks and to discuss the prospects for strengthening cooperation against terrorism.[9] In an exchange facilitated by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, India and Pakistan shared an unprecedented amount of intelligence information on Lashkar-i-Tayyiba/Jama`at-ud-Da`wa in the aftermath of the Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008.[10] The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation also assisted the Indian government with its investigation after the attacks, including by deploying personnel to conduct interviews and use advanced forensic investigation techniques.[11] Yet, a trial for key suspects has been postponed twice by the Lahore High Court in Pakistan and formal charges have yet to be filed against the accused.[12] Using foreign intelligence services as a bridge between India and Pakistan is useful and certainly better than the previous lack of cooperation between the two states, but it is not an adequate substitute for joint, multilateral information sharing at the regional level. Moreover, progress on intelligence sharing will be of limited utility without enhancing active cooperation among law enforcement and judicial officials to prevent terrorist attacks and successfully prosecute those responsible.

Turning Talk into Action

The need for greater cooperation against terrorism continues to figure prominently on the agenda of SAARC summit meetings, but the rhetoric has resulted in little concrete action.[13] This is not surprising given the tensions and mistrust that exist between many of its member states, particularly between the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and India and Pakistan, where concerns that Pakistan's intelligence service is stoking rather than preventing insurgencies in neighboring states is deepening suspicions among its neighbors and Western allies.[14] Furthermore, India and Pakistan have been locked in a deadly dispute over Kashmir for decades.

"One option would be to create a new regional counterterrorism forum for cooperation, which would have the necessary expertise and mandate to provide training and implement related counterterrorism capacity building efforts in South Asia."

These and other deeply rooted differences have crippled interstate cooperation. As V. Balachandran has noted, "unless states within the region can overcome their historical distrust, there can be no progress in eliminating terrorism and insurgency that cross national borders."[15] Some countries have also used SAARC to cynically pursue short-term foreign policy objectives vis-à-vis their rivals at the expense of promoting deeper regional cooperation.[16] Finally, technical limitations and a lack of capacity at the regional and national levels on the subcontinent are also impediments to action. A combination of a lack of confidence among its members and concerns about ceding individual state sovereignty has meant that SAARC members have been reluctant to create a strong secretariat for the organization or to provide it with the needed expertise, mandate, and resources to promote the implementation of SAARC policies and commitments.[17]

Although SAARC's political role should not be underestimated, given the obstacles above it may not be possible in the short-term for it to move beyond rhetorical statements and norm setting to encourage practical counterterrorism cooperation in the region. With suspicions about the connections between security services and terrorist groups and the unwillingness of states to empower SAARC to play a more active role in implementing measures to prevent and combat terrorism, more emphasis needs to be placed on promoting cooperation on technical measures that are less likely to be derailed by political disputes.

Therefore, it would be advisable to establish closer working relationships among "technical" counterterrorism experts through a forum other than SAARC. One option would be to create a new regional counterterrorism forum for cooperation, which would have the necessary expertise and mandate to provide training and implement related counterterrorism capacity building efforts in South Asia. It could also help to build trust among officials from different countries in the region by providing a medium for sharing

8 "SAARC States Team Up to Curb Trans-national Crimes," *The Post* [Islamabad], April 17, 2008.

9 "India, Pakistan to Share Info on Terror Cases," *Economic Times*, April 16, 2008.

10 Joby Warrick and Karen DeYoung, "CIA Helped India, Pakistan Share Secrets in Probe of Mumbai Siege," *Washington Post*, February 16, 2009.

11 Donald Van Duyn, chief intelligence officer, Federal Bureau of Investigation, statement before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Washington, D.C., January 8, 2009.

12 Salman Masood, "Pakistan Postpones Mumbai Trial Again," *New York Times*, October 3, 2009.

13 A record of SAARC Summit Declarations is available online at www.saarc-sec.org/main.php?t=4.1.

14 Shaun Gregory, "ISI and the War on Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30:12 (2007).

15 V. Balachandran, "Insurgency, Terrorism and Transnational Crime in South Asia," in Amit Pandya and Ellen Laipson eds., *Transnational Trends: Middle East and Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, 2008).

16 For example, Smruti S. Pattanaik has noted that "a major hurdle before the organisation has been the failure of some of the member countries—especially Pakistan and Bangladesh—to overcome their proclivity to pursue political goals and limited national agendas within the regional framework." See Smruti S. Pattanaik, "Making Sense of Regional Cooperation: SAARC at Twenty," *Strategic Analysis* 30:1 (2006).

17 For a discussion of this point, see Kishore C. Dash, *Regionalism in South Asia: Negotiating Cooperation, Institutional Structures* (London: Routledge, 2008).

expertise and practices.[18] The police in Pakistan, for example, are "often closer to the front lines in combating terrorism, and better at collecting intelligence, than their counterparts in Pakistan's powerful—and much better-funded—military."[19] Building the capacity of, and trust between, law enforcement and judicial officials and other technical counterterrorism practitioners in the region is critical and could lead to higher levels of political cooperation against terrorism. In the end, SAARC could even endorse or incorporate such a mechanism into its secretariat if it proved successful.

According to Christine Fair, a Pakistan expert at Georgetown University, little U.S. funding has gone to assisting Pakistan's police, a "mere 2.2 percent of the nearly $12 billion provided as aid or military reimbursements under the generous Coalition Support Fund Program."[20] Hassan Abbas, an expert on Pakistani police reform at Harvard University and a former Pakistani government official, argues that at "the least, half of all U.S. funds allocated for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency support in Pakistan should be given to the police and other civilian law enforcement agencies and be closely monitored."[21] Abbas, who is critical of the U.S. "AFPAK" strategy for failing to sufficiently address law enforcement, calls on the United States to "push for more regional cooperation for fighting crime in South Asia."[22]

In Southeast Asia, regional counterterrorism related training centers have played an important role in improving capacities and cooperation. Although the two regions are different and the longstanding tensions that exist between India and Pakistan—both nuclear-armed states—are not as acute among states within Southeast Asia, the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) could provide a possible model for what might be accomplished in South Asia. The JCELC and other regional training and information centers, including the U.S.-funded International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok and the Malaysian-funded Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counterterrorism, have all contributed significantly to improving informal, practical counterterrorism cooperation in that region. The information and training provided by these centers improve the capacities of law enforcement and other officials to conduct effective counterterrorism, criminal, and financial investigations. Through the contacts they forge, these centers also help to improve regional and international law enforcement cooperation. The separate Southeast Asian centers pursue discrete priorities according to the interests of their main funders. In the case of the JCLEC, Australia has partnered closely with Indonesia and has trained more than 3,000 law enforcement and legal officers on issues ranging from post-blast analysis, management of serious crime, financial investigations and criminal intelligence.[23] The JCLEC is located within the Indonesian National Police Academy.

With support from the United States and other donors with a keen interest in improving regional responses to terrorism in South Asia, a South Asian Law Enforcement Academy could be established and equipped in a neutral country in the region such as Bangladesh, which currently has four police training centers in Tangail, Noakhali, Rangpur, and Khulna.[24]

The UN Counterterrorism Committee's Executive Directorate (CTED) organized a regional workshop of law officers and prosecutors from across South Asia that took place in November 2009 in Dhaka, hosted by the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute.[25] Such initiatives are a step in the right direction in a region where creating opportunities for dialogue and cooperation at the operational level is urgently needed. Such externally sponsored workshops could eventually lead to higher-level political engagement among states in the region on a range of counterterrorism issues and help to set the stage for the establishment of a regional law enforcement center in South Asia. The UN's involvement could also be valuable as a convener of activities by offering an alternative to bilateral engagement, which can limit participation and ownership among other stakeholders in the region.

Conclusion

For the Obama administration to be effective in promoting greater cooperation to prevent and fight terrorism in South Asia, it will need to act decisively but also carefully so as not to exacerbate regional tensions. It should sponsor workshops and encourage the creation of a regional forum for cooperation where technical expertise can be exchanged and trust can be developed in pursuit of common objectives.

Following the example of Australia's cooperation with Indonesia in Southeast Asia, the United States, through the departments of Justice and State, should facilitate and fund law enforcement cooperation at a regional level and sponsor a technically-focused forum for steadily building the necessary trust among countries in South Asia. By starting with less politically sensitive areas of training such as forensics and communications and by promoting cooperation on issues related to reducing narcotics trafficking and other transnational criminal activities, it is possible that trust could be established among police officials across the

18 This suggestion was initially explored in a project conducted by the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation and the International Peace Academy in 2008. See Eric Rosand, Naureen Chowdry Fink and Jason Ipe, "Countering Terrorism in South Asia: Strengthening Multilateral Engagement," International Peace Institute, May 2009.

19 Paul Wiseman and Zafar M. Sheikh, "Pakistani Police Overwhelmed, Underfunded," *USA Today*, May 5, 2009.

20 C. Christine Fair, "From Strategy to Implementation: The Future of the U.S.-Pakistan Relationship," testimony presented before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C., May 5, 2009.

21 Hassan Abbas, "Police & Law Enforcement Reform in Pakistan: Crucial for Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism Success," Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, Harvard University, April 2009.

22 Hassan Abbas, "Obama's AfPak Metrics Miss the Mark on Pakistan," *Foreign Policy*, September 21, 2009; Abbas, "Police & Law Enforcement Reform in Pakistan: Crucial for Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism Success."

23 "Statement to the United Nations General Assembly Plenary for Sixth Committee on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy," Susan Grace, director, Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Section, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, September 4, 2008.

24 For more information, see the Bangladesh Police website at www.police.gov.bd/index5.php?category=107.

25 "Summary of Event on Countering Terrorism in South Asia: Building Capacities and Strengthening Multilateral Engagement," Center on Global Counterterrorism, May 20, 2009. Also see the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute website at www.bei-bd.org.

subcontinent. This joint training would not only help to improve basic skills and allow access to more sophisticated equipment—both of which are severely lacking among many police officials in South Asia—but it could also allow for greater cooperation to take root and build the confidence that is necessary to strengthen regional and bilateral cooperation on intelligence sharing that helps monitor and stifle terrorist activity.

The challenges of forging counterterrorism cooperation in South Asia are formidable, as is evident from the limited results during the last 20 years of efforts mounted within SAARC. Funding and support for a regional law enforcement cooperation center on the subcontinent will have to be bolstered by much needed police reform efforts within individual countries in the region where corruption and lack of capacity remain major concerns. Although there is no guarantee that a willingness to cooperate among law enforcement officials in the region will take root as quickly as it has in other parts of the world, the urgent need for greater cooperation against terrorism demands bold action.

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Singapore's Approach to Counterterrorism

By Gavin Chua Hearn Yuit

SINGAPORE REPRESENTS A BASTION of general stability amid low intensity conflicts in Southeast Asia. It has not suffered a terrorist attack on its soil in almost two decades. Nevertheless, Singapore's counterterrorism community believes that the country could face a terrorist attack at any moment in the future, and by facing this reality it constantly attempts to respond to rapidly emerging terrorism trends.[1]

In the last year, for example, Asia has experienced two major terrorist attacks targeting hotels in Mumbai and Jakarta, both signifying an upward trend in sophistication and scale of terrorist operations. To adequately respond to these threats, Singapore has adopted social resilience as a key counterterrorism strategy.[2] Singapore's government considers race and religion the country's "most visceral and dangerous fault line."[3] It believes that reducing racial and religion tension[4] in this multi-ethnic and multi-religious country is critical in preventing future acts of terrorist violence in Singapore.[5]

This article will first provide background on the history of terrorism in Singapore, including how the country has foiled a number of recent plots. It will then identify the Singapore government's various programs to establish social resiliency and reduce jihadist radicalization within its society. Finally, the article will show the steps Singapore has taken most recently to stir the public's imagination to the threat of terrorism to maintain public vigilance.

Singapore's Experience with Terrorism

The last bombings to strike Singapore occurred in November-December 1987, targeting the American International Assurance building and Shell Tower. Before 1987, Singapore faced a number of other small-scale bombings, some involving Palestinian terrorists.[6] Then, in 1991, Singapore's counterterrorism apparatus received international attention when it successfully stormed a hijacked airliner and killed four terrorists claiming to be members of the Pakistan Peoples' Party.[7] Terrorist violence in Singapore faded out thereafter.

In the months after the 9/11 attacks, however, the threat of terrorism returned. Singapore's Internal Security Department (ISD) prevented Singapore's JI branch from launching a series of bomb attacks targeting foreign embassies and U.S. interests in the country in December 2001. The ISD detained a total of 13 JI members, including their spiritual

1 "The Fight Against Terror," National Security Coordination Centre (NSCC), Singapore, 2004.

2 Through the government's community engagement programs and other initiatives to build social resilience, civilian communities are expected to develop capacities to "detect and prevent disruptions to a nation's security, and where necessary, to absorb shocks and bounce back into a functioning condition after a crisis as quickly as possible." Definition provided by the Centre of Excellence for National Security's Social Resilience program.

3 Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, National Day Rally Speech, August 16, 2009.

4 In the 1950s and 1960s, Singapore experienced race riots. One of the most prominent incidents was the "Prophet Muhammad Birthday Riots" between Malays and Chinese, which occurred on July 21, 1964. A Malay procession following the Prophet Muhammad's birthday celebrations attacked ethnic Chinese spectators. The country's race and religion fault line was also fueled by the crackdown on Singapore's Jemaah Islamiya branch in December 2001, when the possibility of a Singaporean terrorism threat became a reality. See "Appeal for Calm," *Straits Times*, July 22, 1964; Norman Vasu, "(En)countering Terrorism: Multiculturalism and Singapore," *Asian Ethnicity* 9:1 (2008).

5 Of Singapore's 4.9 million residents, 74% are Chinese, 13% Malay, 9% Indian, and 3% other ethnicities. The traditional Chinese religions, Buddhism and Taoism, account for 51% of the resident population. The proportion of Muslims and Hindus have remained relatively unchanged since 1990 at 15% and 4% respectively. Among the Chinese, there were more significant shifts in religious affiliation, with Buddhism and Christianity surpassing Taoism as the main religions from 1990 to 2000. In comparison, almost all Malays were Muslim without significant changes during the last 20 years. Among the Indians, Hinduism had the largest following (55%) and Islam accounted for slightly more than a quarter of Indians. The "Others" category refers to smaller ethnic minority groups, such as the Eurasians. See "Monthly Digest of Statistics Singapore," Singapore Department of Statistics, November 2009; "Singapore Census of Population, 2000," Singapore Department of Statistics, May 2001.

6 "Faber House Explosion," *Straits Times*, March 18, 1985.

7 "1991 – SQ 117 Rescue," MINDEF History, Government of Singapore, 2006.