The Heretic Nature of Al-Qaeda's Ideology

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to illustrate the ideological aspect of Al-Qaeda that constitutes the pillar of the organisation based on distinct interpretation of Quran and biased understanding of the meaning of Jihad. The functional method of Al-Qaeda is not simplistic or unsystematic, aimed at a particular target or focused or specific country or region. In my findings, it is evident that the formation of such transnational organisation couldn't have been revealed without political Ideology with its manifesto and the mechanism to spread its messages all over the world. As well, the article reveals that it will not be correct to put Al-Qaeda among the category of the classical terror groups as I have shown in the article as a comparison. Moreover, Al-Qaeda is not similar to any categories of political actor; since the distinction between Jihad and waging war has always been differentiated in the context of Political Islam. Furthermore, my finding reveals the heretic ideology of Al-Qaeda which had spread all over the world and has become an enemy to Islam itself. Harmed the reputation of Islam as a religion. Attention on the ideologic context of Al-Qaeda hasn't been researched well previously, unknown to majority of the experts. Instead, the attention at most has been put on its ground actions, security concerns and counter terrorism. The article reveals Al-Qaeda's distinct ideology and its dissimilarity with political actors in the Islamic world, as well as with other liberation movements that is helpful to choose correctly on how to fight against terror in smart methods.
Keywords: Al-Qaeda, Global Jihad, Radical Ideology, Middle East, Terrorism, Islamic Caliphate.

Abstrak

Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk menggambarkan aspek Ideologi Al-Qaeda yang merupakan pilar organisasi berdasarkan interpretasi yang berbeda dari Al-Qur'an dan pemahaman yang bias tentang makna Jihad. Metode fungsional Al-Qaeda tidak sederhana atau tidak sistematis, ditujukan pada target tertentu atau terfokus atau negara atau wilayah tertentu. Dalam temuan saya, terbukti bahwa pembentukan organisasi transnasional semacam itu tidak mungkin terungkap tanpa Ideologi politik dengan manifestonya dan mekanisme untuk menyebarkan pesannya ke seluruh dunia. Selain itu, artikel tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa tidak tepat menempatkan Al-Qaeda di antara kategori kelompok teror klasik seperti yang telah saya tunjukkan dalam artikel tersebut sebagai pembanding. Selain itu, Al-Qaeda tidak mirip dengan kategori aktor politik mana pun; karena perbedaan antara Jihad dan mengobarkan perang selalu

dibedakan dalam konteks Islam Politik. Selanjutnya, temuan saya mengungkapkan ideologi sesat Al-Qaeda yang telah menyebar ke seluruh dunia dan telah menjadi musuh Islam itu sendiri. Merusak reputasi Islam sebagai agama. Perhatian pada konteks ideologis Al-Qaeda belum diteliti dengan baik sebelumnya, tidak diketahui oleh sebagian besar ahli. Sebaliknya, perhatian paling banyak diberikan pada tindakan di lapangan, masalah keamanan dan kontra terorisme. Artikel tersebut mengungkapkan perbedaan ideologi Al-Qaeda dan ketidaksamaannya dengan aktor politik di dunia Islam, serta dengan gerakan pembebasan lainnya yang membantu untuk memilih dengan benar tentang cara memerangi teror dengan metode cerdas.

Kata kunci: Al-Qaeda, Jihad Global, Ideologi Radikal, Timur Tengah, Terorisme, Khilafah Islam.

INTRODUCTION

The radical Islamic ideology and the violence derived from it has brought great attention not only to the politicians or experts in the field but also to the huge audience called the international arena. Interestingly, "Global Radical Islamic Movements" become more understandable and logical when it is viewed not as an outcome of classical terrorism, but could be more accurate in paying attention to the ideology hidden behind the violence. In relation, there are two distinct notions regarding the base of the threat, in which the one accepts Al-Qaeda as classical terrorist group that causes violence and killings directed towards innocent people and the second stresses on the ideological threat of the organization and its spread throughout not only in the Arabic world, but also in the Muslim world and among the Muslim population living in Western countries. Nevertheless, although Al-Qaeda is tracked among the terrorist groups and it contains violence in its responding strategy, the threat stems more to the Arab nations and to world security from its ideology and its actions such as creating networks and spreading Radicalism, which is aimed to unite the Muslim world under one shelter and control it. On the other hand, there is no distinct definition on the ideological aspect of Al-Qaeda and there haven't been complementary definition as well. For instance, Rohan Gunaranta, notes that Al-Qaeda's ideology is based on Islamic thinkers such as Muhammad Abdul Wahhab and Sayyid Qutb and it aims to purifications of Islam through violent struggle. Graham Fuller on the other hand, mentions that is it not right to categorize Political Islam as an ideology such as socialism, liberalism, communism, or fascism, but it is a religious-cultural-political framework and not an ideology. Moreover, John A. Turner, cites that Al-Qaeda's ideology has more social impact rather than a nation-state formation, seeks to create collective identity and interact within the public sphere. Thus, none of the definitions have shown the essential heretic ideology of Al-Qaeda that has been created or revealed to gain power and rule the Muslim world with its own imagination (Bakker, E., & Boer, 2007; Gunaranta, 2005; Turner, 2014).

In the first part of the article, I will remark the definitions of classical understanding of terrorism, how Al-Qaeda could be in relevance to that explanation and the notion of a political Philosopher Michael Walzer where he explains the terrorism of the radicals as a method to fight the enemy, and as long as the enemy is configured, the victims are generalized under its understanding. In other words, terror is not a violence per se but war tactic (Walzer, 2004). Moreover, I will cite other Islamic radical organization such as Hamas where its action and violence is focused on local cause against one specific enemy and its radical views aren't seen as threat to the international system and Armenian terrorist group ASALA where its expressive terrorism and its core goal was to gain attention. Yet, in the case of Al-Qaeda, the threat comes not only from the attacks and the violence, but from the fear of the emergence of Islamic threat

as a rivalry to the existing Muslim nations and the West. For instance, David Kilcullen notes the seriousness of the advancement of Al-Qaeda from local to global and its outcomes in world terrorism and counterterrorism issues (Kilcullen, 2012, p. 12). The second part of the article will focus on the rationale of Al-Qaeda in announcing radical jihad against near and far enemy and their motivation in spreading radicalism both in domestic region (Arabic peninsula) and in foreign stadium (The West) which shows the essential threat from Al-Qaeda comes from its ideology but not only through the terrorist attacks against appointed targets.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Violence or Ideology?

The classical understanding of terrorism among experts is described as an attack by group of people against innocents. For example William Safire mentions as "…persuasion by fear; the intimidation of society by a small group, using as its weapon that society's repugnance at the murder of innocents (Safire, 2008). Similarly, the Oxford Dictionary gives the core understanding to the term as "…life-threatening actions perpetrated by politically motivated self-appointed sub-state groups (McLean, I., & McMillan, 2009). Thus the above mentioned points are stressed upon the action of violence. This explanation draws the attention only on the bombings and the casualties done by Al-Qaeda such as the destruction of WTC and the attack on Pentagon with total 3000 death in 2001 or the 10 bombs on 4 trains explosions in Madrid, Spain, killing 200 people and injuring few thousands (Hayes, L, Brunner, 2017). However, in terms of Islamic groups such as Al-Qaeda, the reality is more than just provocation against any government or group of people for the following reasons: First, from Walzer's explanation, civilians are not seen as innocents, but as a subject in the battle as bin Laden explains the reason of generalizing the US government with its population as an enemy is because the US citizen pays taxes and the American soldier being citizen represents its government (Lawrence, 2005). In other words, Al-Qaeda considers the entire population of its opponent as an enemy and an object for an attack. Furthermore as Barack Mendelssohn puts it "Al-Qaeda's ideology not only challenges the sovereignty of specific states, but also brings under attack some of the principles and institutions of the IS. Al-Qaeda rejects the authority of states to recognize other states, especially when it comes to Muslim land (Mendelsohn, 2005). Thus, Al-Qaeda is not a group of terrorists who attack the innocents in this manner but a transnational organization that works to establish an Islamic caliphate.

To reveal the ideological importance of the issue, I will argue the case with another Terrorist group known as the Armenian Secret Army For The Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) where its goal was to gain attention worldwide from the superpowers to act in favor of the Armenian question.Thus its attacks were aimed against Turkish politicians and people who denied the reality of the Armenian Genocide (MIPT TERRORISM KNOWLEDGE BASE, 2007). Evidently, the threat of the Armenian terrorist group had no intentions to create an Armenian nation that unites the Middle East under one territory, or urges the Armenian Diaspora to start a battle against Turkey's allies, whereas Al-Qaeda's ideological threat comes from its call for armed Jihad against the West and works to awaken the Muslim population to start insurgencies around the world by altering its operations more on international basis with ideological motives derived from Qutb (BURKE, J, 2004). Thus its strategy consists of several points which include: practicing core Islam, overthrow Arab regimes that Al-Qaeda considers as not Islamic, evacuate crusaders and no believers from the Arabic Peninsula, Establish an Islamic Caliphate worldwide through connections of other radical Islamic groups (HAYNES, 2005). Furthermore, examining another Islamic radical movement such as Hamas it becomes clear that its threat is not from its ideology and not directed towards shifting the world order as Hamas's intention focuses on the Jewish State and Zionism and fights under the name of Islam

to liberate the territory and establish Islamic country (Post, 2007). Hence Al-Qaeda is not a simply terrorist group fighting for reistance, but a radical Islamic organization that has its ideology and calls the Muslims around the globe to unite under its shelter.

Second, although the journalist Jason Burke accepts Al-Qaeda as group of fighters against the invaders during the war in Afghanistan, and considers Al-Qaeda as an ordinary resistance group fighting under the name of Islam against the Soviets, and has no cells or networks (BURKE, 2004, p. 6). the real threat was the establishment of radical Islam and its core disputes with the Arab Muslim nations in issues such on what basis should The Islamic world be constituted and who has the credibility to reign it as Rohan Guarantee puts it "Al-Qaeda is a jihad organization with a global reach. In keeping its original mandate, its principal aim was to inspire and incite Islamic movements and the Muslim masses worldwide to attack those who threaten Islam and Muslims (Gunaratna, 2016). In addition, bin Laden accuses the Saudi regime and considers it not Islamic due its correlation with the United States and other western countries(CNN, 2001; Mendelsohn, 2005). Moreover, Jeffrey Haynes reveals the connection Al-Qaeda has since 1990s in Eritrea, Somalia, Egypt, Pakistan Saudi Arabia, and mentions about the creation of the radical Islamist understanding of the organization (HAYNES, 2005, p. 182). As a result, Reuters cites as "Saudi Arabia's arrests of 113 Al-Qaeda-linked militants, including two suicide bomb teams, shows that the jihadi threat to the world's top oil exporter has not disappeared…"(Karam, 2010). Furthermore, Al-Qaeda's threat comes more from its circulation of ideology by the use of technology and internet. Abdel Bari Atwan mentions the importance of the Internet in Al-Qaeda's strategy and the existence of 4,500 jihadi websites which bring ideologically similar people together and advocate the believers to join the Jihad and free the Muslim nation from unbelievers (Atwan, 2010). Thus, the threat is not only the violence caused by the terrorist group, but from its ideology of spreading the radical Islamic views among the Muslims.

Considering the threat issue, Al-Qaeda has not only uses the internet to spread its extremist views, but also functions very actively in the regions that settles as a core threat not in terms of the existence of the supported fighters, but because of the emergence of the ideological threat , as Rohan Gunaratna puts it " Today, al Qaeda's real power is the disparate groups it had trained, financed, armed and most importantly ideologized. The Al-Qaeda network (Al-Qaeda group + its associated groups) and ideologically affiliated cells comprise the Al-Qaeda movement."(Gunaratna, 2016 b). Why kilcullen argues the important of counter insurgency instead of counter terrorism is because al qaeda is well developed within the society and its ideology is strong although the journalist mentions about the inefficiency of Al-Qaeda in dominating the region.

Ideological Battle: Muslim World Attacked by Radical Ideology

In this part of the article, i will argue against the notion that Al-Qaeda's actions are merely against the foreign existence in the Arabic Peninsula and it doesn't follow any intentions to take over and change the political and social situation in the Muslim world (Hegghammer, 2006). Even so, Al-Qaeda's passive existence in terms of violation in the Muslim world and in Arabic countries, does not mean that the threat is directed only towards the foreign objects, and the clash between the radicals and existing governments is not evident. The real threat is against the existing political and religious structure as being an obstacle in uniting the Ummah (David Kilcullen, 2015). Although Al-Qaeda have arranged several casualties in the Arabic peninsula towards American and Western objects and explained its enmity towards the existence of the Western influence in the region, its refusal of the American occupation of Saudi's wealth and so forth, Al-Qaeda's real threat emerges from its resistance towards the current regimes as Quintan Wiktorowicz and John Kalnter notes "the jihadis charged the Saudis and other regimes

in the Muslim world with un-Islamic behavior and thus apostasy, and called for a jihad to remove them."(Wiktorowicz, Q., & Kaltner, 2016). Al-Qaeda threatens the Saudi government by asking to leave the country (Chaliand, G., & Blin, 2007, p. 224). Similarly, the radicals of Al-Qaeda were in disagreement with the Saudi regime due to the different vision of their ideology in terms of ruling the Islamic world, and Al-Qaeda showed its opposition and its willingness to change the vision of Islam within the Arabic peninsula (Post, 2007, p. 197). Furthermore, bin Laden accuses the Saudi regime of reproducing the vision of the American foreign policy towards the Islamic issues and its inability of protecting the Muslim rights in Palestine and Iraq (Lawrence, 2005, p. 36). As a result, Al-Qaeda is actively imposing its war against the regime by using the internet and take the battle to ideological field by propaganda (Atwan, 2010, p. 138), as the Syrian Presidents puts it "…Al-Qaeda's extremist ideology is now attracting increased support, expanding its networks among a new generation of supporters …in the Sunni Muslim world (HAYNES, 2005). Thus the ideas and statements mentioned above shows the emergence of the cold war between the Muslims and the threat originated from Al-Qaeda's ideology.

In addition, It is worth mentioning the steps taken or implied against the radical Al-Qaeda threat which shows the concern of the scholars and experts of the ideological threat spread by the radicals. For example, King Abdullah II of Jordan arranges a get together session with Muslim scholars and invites them to condemn the ideology imposed by radical movements (ammanmessage.com, 2006; Kilcullen, 2015). Moreover, David Kilcullen reveals the extraordinary reality of al Qaeda as not being a traditional terrorist movement, but a global uprising which calls the Muslim world to unite and establish the caliphate (Kilcullen, 2015, pp. 28–29) and emphasizes the importance of dealing with Al-Qaeda on basis of counter-insurgency, rather than counter-terrorism (Kilcullen, 2015, pp. 12–13). Furthermore, Saudi authorities have started anti radicalization campaign which is aimed to educate the public and protect the population from the radical ideology (Boucek, 2008). Thus, although the purpose of this article is to show the threat of Al-Qaeda, but the notions cited by Scholars and experts about how defeat Al-Qaeda helps to understand the emergence of the threat from its ideology but not only from the imposed violence.

Also, Al-Qaeda's ability of spreading its ideology puts the international order in danger in dealing with Radical movements around the world that are correlated as Rohan Gunaratna indicates that although Al-Qaeda was partially ineffective after the American invasion, the threat of Global Jihad is still active and has its connections with regional and global affiliates (Gunaratna, 2016). For instance, the linkage between Al-Qaeda and Southeast Asian radical terrorist movement JI is based on the Ideology of uniting the Muslim world under one core Islamic unity and the faithful relations between the leaders of Al-Qaeda and the JI indicates the strong impact of the ideology in these types of terrorist groups(Gunaratna, 2016, p. 20). As a result, the mutual worldview between Al-Qaeda and JI on the ground lead them to be engaged in terrorist operations such as hijacking attempt in Bangkok (Gunaratna, 2016, p. 23). Thus, These actions mentioned above show the importance of the radical ideology and its threat to the international system in terms of the impact of uniting organizations from different regions.

The West Attacked by Radical Ideology

The West has been attacked in recent years by terrorist blasts and the attention was merely on the violence Al-Qaeda was engaged as being a message for the western countries to withdraw from Afghanistan and other Muslim countries (BBC, 2004, 2005). However, further research shows that the threat stems from Al-Qaeda in Western front is more than just an act of violation aimed to draw an attention upon the radical terrorist, but Al-Qaeda's intention has two dimensions: First to awaken the Muslim Diaspora and involve them in the uniting caliphate

project which will oppose the crusaders. Second, to show its hatred towards the Western civilization and a message that Al-Qaeda is capable of defeating the most powerful nation. Hence the threat is not only from the terrorist attacks, but also from the attempt of radical groups in radicalizing the Muslim population in Europe which can create several casualties within the countries they live (Farmer, 2007). Moreover, Al-Qaeda's ideology is in harmony with Samuel Huntington's findings as radical Islam is the next threat to the International order (HAYNES, 2005), also Sayyid Qutb implies about the Impossibility of Islam and the West to adapt and live in peace (Farmer, 2007).

The strategy of radical Islamists in targeting the Muslim population has its extraordinary methods such as using the mosques, internet, associations and appoint scholars to spread the core idea of radicalism to create the extremism and enmity (Kilcullen, 2012, p. 245). Moreover, Al-Qaeda has its own standing in advocating to embrace radicalization and participate in the battle against the infidels and its allies (Kilcullen, 2015, p. 246). For example, the encouraging object of the Madrid Bombings is related to the Islamic Cultural Centre known as Mosque 30 which spreads radical thoughts and its capability of uniting same minded people to organize crime (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). Similarly, radicals have created a ghetto in London in Beeston's Mosque and the surrounding community and Jihad was an essential issue to learn and talk about. Furthermore, In US, radical NGO's are becoming imminent danger in spreading works of Radical thinkers, organizing gatherings, classes for youths to learn the radical vision and so forth (Silber & Bhatt, 2007)b.

Hence, whether this vision has its success or not, it is evident from the examples above that the real threat is emerging from the ideology and those who advocating in learning and practicing radicalism. As a result the Western Muslim population have started to be more active in demanding their rights in practicing Islam under proper conditions and demanding from the European governments creation of school girls, ritually slaughtered meat, the battle over wearing the headscarves and so forth (Farmer, 2007, p. 186), and this resulted in increased radicalization in Europe that is Al-Qaeda's most important tactics to challenge the international counterterrorism (Farmer, 2007, p. 226). Thus, the core threat comes from the radicals is the creation of a radical Islamic identity in different regions of the world, rather than the attacks appointed to targets.

It is worth mentioning the anti-radicalization efforts started by European countries which shows the importance of the threat emerging from the active radical groups within the society, as Dutch officials see the threat not only in terms of security but the will of the radicals to isolate the Muslim population for its surroundings which can result in demographic problems (Vidino, 2008). Another aspect which is related to the sustaining radicalization is brought by David Kilcullen where counter terrorism has seen inefficient in dealing with Al-Qaeda, for the reason that Al-Qaeda organization uses its ideology ,and through that mingles with the tribes that operates. Thus, it means that Al-Qaeda is not a classical terrorist group or separatist movement, but a globalized radical organization that has its ideology and supporters in different regions. As a result, in dealing with such organization, the authorities should challenge the ideology and inform the society about the harmful and unacceptable manners that radicals follow (Kilcullen, 2015, p. 265).

The second issue is the enmity of Al-Qaeda towards the US not only for the reason of being the occupying force within the Muslim world per se, but because radical Islam ideologically finds itself incompatible with the western culture and accepts the West as an opponent (Farmer, 2007, p. 86). Because of this, the priority of the radical ideology in this battle gives the notion that radical Al-Qaeda is not a terrorist movement that fights the US only because it is occupying the Muslim lands as Jason Burke mentions about Al-Qaeda being far from ideology and clash of civilization statement and its battle is political due to the existence

of the foreign influence in the Arabic peninsula (BURKE, 2004, pp. 21–23), but for the reason that the US is the pioneer of the West and Al-Qaeda is creating an ideology that opposes the Western values and becoming its core enemy and the battle is not territorial or meant to violate the enemy per se, but ideological (HAYNES, 2005; Huntington, 2010). For example, a bin Laden puts it "…the battle isn't between the Al-Qaeda organization and the global Crusaders. Rather, the battle is between Muslims-the people of islam-and the global Crusaders" (Lawrence, 2005). Moreover, the policy of Bush Administration in generalizing the terror issue with Islam and its inability in establishing good relations with the Muslim and Arab world and seeing Islam as an enemy (Kellner, 2002), further emphasizes that the battle is between civilizations and the threat is emerging from the ideology as radical Islam is advocating of facing new enemies in international system.

CONCLUSION

This article has shown that the violence is not only the threat coming from Al-Qaeda, but its ideology that aims to give a new understanding of Islam and Al-Qaeda's willingness to implement the created ideology into action. Moreover this article has revealed the nature of the radical Islamic ideology that Al-Qaeda offered with a comparison to liberation movements such as radical Islamic Hamas and the Armenian ASALA , where the former although emerged from similar Islamic roots, its intention is focused on fighting the Zionism and the nation of Israel in Middle East. The latter has expressive attitude ans its target appointed towards the Turkish diplomats and urges the international arena to pay attention to the Armenian Question. In terms of Al-Qaeda, the paper showed the uniqueness if its ideology and the hidden message that confronts the West in general and the Muslim government in particular. Furthermore, this article emphasized the ideological threat of Al-Qaeda by showing the importance of using networks and technology in its tactics, in order to spread the visions of radical scholars and to educate the youth to make them involved in the Muslim unity idea, although there is the notion that Al-Qaeda is not an organization with networks and influential abilities, and its intention is more focused on fighting the foreign armies.

The next part of the article stressed on the emergence of the ideology of radical Islam in international scene and its threat is directed specially towards Saudi Arabia's ruling family as being accused of not practicing Islam under desired circumstances, and most importantly unaccepted because of its relations with Islam's most popular enemy the US. Thus, this implies that Al-Qaeda is not only a threat to the US objects in the Arabic Peninsula, but also to the ruling family due to its aim of establishing the Caliphate under radicalized version. Moreover, Al-Qaeda's threat to the west again is not only to cause violence and try to defeat the enemy, but also its aim to awaken the Muslim population living in the western countries and invite them to join the uniting mission through its networks and cells that has the impact in developing the radicalization of the Muslim Diaspora. Hence, the threat is the emergence of the radical ideology within the West through Al-Qaeda's active participation. In this regard, the threat of Al-Qaeda towards the West intended to generate the clash between the Islam world and the Western values which is a challenge to the international security.

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