

Chinese Scholar Favours China - India - Israel Quasi Alliance



China, India and Israel would do well to establish a consultative mechanism to fight jihad. The three most important non-Muslim and secular societies on the periphery of Eurasia have strong mutual complementarities in the matter, contends noted Chinese scholar DEGANG SUN, currently Associate Professor at Middle East Studies Institute, Shanghai International Studies University.

Idealists may still prefer to brand it a mere figment of imagination but a global jihad network is looming all over from the Middle East to the geographically broader "arc of instability," covering a huge area of North Africa, Central Asia and South Asia. Recent bomb attacks, including at two hotels in Jakarta, Indonesia on July 17, 2009, are indicative of what may be in store in the Southeast Asia region as well in coming days.

The global jihadi network is a loose organization guided by extreme or radical Islamic ideologies. It includes various terrorist and extremist groups, such as Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Hizb-ut-Tahrir in Central Asia,

Army of God of Ayman Al Zawahiri (Al Qaeda or Egyptian Islamic Jihad) in the Middle East, Qaidat Al Jihad in Iraq (under the leadership of Abu Musab Al Zarqawi), Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Jamaat ul-Fuqra, Sipah-e-Sahaba, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Taliban in Pakistan, Jemmah Islamiya in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, Muslim United



Terrorists : same everywhere

Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA) in India, Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front and Harkat-ul-Ansar (presently known as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen) in India's Kashmir, East Turkistan Liberation Organization, East Turkistan Islamic Movement, United Revolutionary Front for Eastern Turkistan as well as the previous World Uyghur Youth Council in China's Xinjiang.

All such local Islamic terrorist groups are interwoven in terms of financing, personnel recruitment and training and sharing of information. They have similar goals, particularly, linking with each other via computer internet, migration, visits and people-to-people exchanges. They are all

shouldering the holy cause of spreading Islamic fundamentalism and destabilizing secular societies under the guidance of Al Qaeda.

How does the global jihadi network interact with each other financially? The true story is probably always beyond the common people's knowledge. However, it is confirmed that there is an Informal Value Transfer System (IVTS) called Hawala, which frequently offers a channel for money laundering for the global Jihad network. Hawala (also known as hundi) is based on the performance of a huge network of money brokers primarily located in the Middle East, North and Northeast Africa and South Asia. According to the *Economist*, the yearly financial transaction of Hawala among terrorist

groups in Pakistan has reached 2 billion to 5 billion dollars after 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Various terrorist organizations exchange their views and ideas within the shelter of religious schools. In order to legitimize their action and arouse people's sympathy and support, they tend to participate in various social works, such as running or financing religious schools and making use of the platform to spread radical Islamic ideologies. In Pakistan today, there are over twenty thousand religious schools which have not yet registered with the local and central governments. These religious schools receive abundant financial, moral and personnel support from

groups in Saudi Arabia and other rich Gulf nations, including some radical and extreme Islamic organizations in the Middle East. Some radical groups make use of religious schools in the regions to spread global Jihad. Students there come from all corners of the world, particularly the Middle East, Central Asia, China's Xinjiang, India's Kashmir, Bangladesh and Southeast Asian nations.

The global jihad network has posed an overwhelming challenge to the regional political pattern in the "Arc of Instability", including the secular Islamic authorities in the region. In the long run, this region's secular societies will be the most vulnerable ones to attack. Within the background of global jihad network, big powers have adjusted their respective anti-terror campaign. For instance, American President Barack Obama has resolutely, shifted his focus from Iraq to central and south Asia in his counter-terror campaign.

However, China, India and Israel, the frontlines of global jihad network aggression, haven't yet initiated any campaign. From the Chinese perspective, the overwhelming terrorist threat is the so-called East Turkistan Islamic Movement, which has a close tie with Al-Qaeda and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and which has undermined the social stability in Xinjiang, China. Up till now, China's anti-terror campaign has been confined within the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). But the riot in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang on July 5, 2009, which caused over one and a half thousand casualties, has already revealed that the anti-terror situation in North-west China is more serious and substantial than expected. Volumes have already been written on the terrorist activities against India. The terrorist groups

targeting at Israel are mainly in the Middle East. They have had close ties also with similar groups in Central Asia and South Asia.

When Islamic jihad is increasingly globalized, China, India and Israel, the most important non-Muslim and secular societies on the periphery of Eurasia, have to join their hands to fight terrorists from three different fronts towards the same goal. Confronted with the common threat, China, India and Israel would do well to establish a consultative mechanism on anti-



Armed police in Xinjiang conducting anti-terror drills

terrorism. The three nations have strong mutual complementarities in anti-terrorism. They are big powers economically, militarily and politically in East Asia, South Asia and West Asia respectively. China is the major sponsor of SCO and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. India is the largest and the most powerful and influential state in South Asia. And Israel is presumably the most powerful state in the Middle East in terms of military capability and mobility, and possibly the only nuclear power in the region. Moreover, since the founding of Israel in 1948, Israelis have been living in a state of terror and they have launched numerous anti-terror campaigns in the past six decades. Israel has acquired rich anti-terror experience tactically and strategically. This could be made use of better if the three countries come

together, share their experiences in the field and devise common strategies to counter terrorism.

It is good that the three countries have already laid some kind of a preliminary political foundation for their future anti-terror cooperation. India and Israel have quite close-knit cooperation in military intelligence, especially since the Mumbai attack in November 2008. During the 2008 Beijing Olympics Games, Israeli anti-terror experts reportedly contributed a lot to China's security system. In the coming Shanghai World Expo next year, Israel seems willing to contribute to its Chinese counterpart in anti-terrorism. Sino-Indian relations have also improved a lot in recent years. Although the two countries still have a long way to go before they settle their territorial dispute, bilateral mutual trust has been effectively strengthened. Both Chinese and Indian elites have realized that the two largest and emerging powers have more to share and cooperate with each other than before.

Given this background, it should not be difficult for the three sides to establish a tri-lateral platform to exchange their views and counter terrorism. The three countries' military officials could come together to exchange intelligence on radical Islamic groups' activity in the "Arc of Instability" in particular. China, India and Israel today could fight together global jihad network from three different directions and stabilize their own regions, rolling back the network's influence. And finally, the three countries' academic circles and institutes in anti-terror studies could also promote their interaction and exchanges. Needless to say, the proposed China-India-Israel consultative triangle would not but supplement anti-terror mechanisms under the banners of SCO and NATO too.