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SRI LANKA ATTACKS

NEW OPENINGS BY ISLAMIC STATE

CHANGING
NATURE
OF TERROR

A PROFILE OF
ATTACKERS

THE INDIAN
CONNECTION

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SUBCONTINENT NEXT

To effectively counter the stated goals of this powerful AQIS coalition, counter-terrorism experts, intelligence agencies, and policy makers around the world should take the clear Sharia-based statements found in the *Code of Conduct* to heart, and accentuate this threat by paying much closer attention to the global Deoband madrassa system.



Bomb attack in Sri Lanka.

The May 2019 issue of *Defence & Security Alert* (pp. 36-41) included an article entitled *Madrassas Ingrained Worldwide*.

While focussing on the global network of Deoband madrassas, the authors stated:

“Identifying the source of *jihād* ideology, as taught in the Salafi madrassas in the West, as well as in other countries around the world, may not prevent every possible terrorist attack, but it would certainly help provide strong indicators (i.e. connect the dots) between the Islamic indoctrination of young boys and men, and future terror attacks.”

Sadly, this statement was soon proven true, when eight members of the Deobandi-influenced National Tawheed Jamaat (NTJ), a group of Sunni, Salafi *Jihadists*, set off multiple bombs across Sri Lanka, starting at 08:45 on Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019.

*Exactly the same time the World Trade Center attacks began on September 11, 2001.

Genesis

Initially described as a very small, previously unknown, obscure Islamic radical group, NTJ is actually part of an international coalition of Deoband-influenced *Jihadist* groups, with links to [1] multiple tens of thousands of madrassas (often supported by Saudi Arabia), [2] the highest levels of the kaleidoscopic Al-Qaeda/Islamic State (AQ/IS) network, and [3] to the global Muslim Brotherhood (MB) organisation.

Note: For additional background on the connections between the AQ/IS and/or global MB network, two resources include a 6 May 2019 article entitled *The Terrorist Ties That Bind*, as well as 11 May 2019 study entitled *The Muslim Brotherhood's Ties To ISIS And Al-Qaeda*.

At this point, it should be noted that what is commonly known today as ‘Al-Qaeda’, was actually founded in February of 1998 as the World Islamic Front (aka the International Islamic Front) by five prominent Islamic leaders, including [1] Sheikh Usamah Bin-Muhammad Bin-Ladin, [2] Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, [3] Abu-Yasir Rifai Ahmad Taha, Emir of the Egyptian Islamic Group, [4] Sheikh Mir Hamzah, Secretary of Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan, and [5] Fazlur Rahman, Emir of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh.

In addition, at least 14 major, international Salafi organisations pledged loyalty to this new AQ coalition, including at least seven that were directly linked to the Deoband branch of Islam (highlighted in **bold font** below).

These original 14 organisations include the **055 Brigade** (aka the Shadow Army, a mixture of mercenary *Jihad* fighters from the Middle East, Central Asia and Southeast Asia that were integrated into the Taliban from 1995-2001), the Islamic *Jihad* Group (Egypt), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Turkistan Islamic Movement (or Party), Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines (*Jihadist* pirates also known as the Islamic State in the Philippines), Chechen & North Caucasian *Jihad* Groups, **Uyghur Jihad** Groups (Xinjiang Province, Western China), **Harkat-ul Mujahideen** (Pakistan), Lashkar-e-Taiba (Pakistan), **Sipah-e-Sahaba** (Pakistan), **Lashkar-e-Jhangvi** (Afghanistan), **Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami** (Pakistan) and the **Taliban**, aka the **Deobandi Taliban** (Afghanistan).

Brief Background - The Easter Sunday Bombings In Sri Lanka

At 08:45 on Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019, eight ‘well-educated’ Salafi Sunni Muslims of ‘wealth and privilege’ simultaneously detonated



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explosive vests at St. Sebastian’s Church in Katuwapitiya (Negombo) and St. Anthony’s Church in the

capital city of Colombo (both in western Sri Lanka), and at St. Mary's Cathedral and / or the Evangelical Charismatic Zion Church in Batticaloa (300 miles away in the eastern part of the country).

The six coordinated bombings by members of the Deobandi-influenced National Tawheed Jamaat (NTJ), also targeted the Cinnamon Grand, the Kingsbury and Shangri-La hotels, all located in the heart of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The NTJ, *aka Jamaat At-Tawheed Al-Wataniyah*, *aka ديج و تال اتي ن طول*, *ديج و تال اتي ن طول*, *aka National Monotheism*

Organisation, is affiliated with at least nine other Thowheed Jamaat groups, including the All India Thowheed Jamath (AITJ), Sri Lanka Thowheed Jamath* (SLTJ), Tamil Nadu Thowheed Jamaat (TNTJ India), Qatar India Thowheed Centre (QITC), UAE Thowheed Jamath (Dubai TNTJ), United States Thowheed Jamath (USTJ), United Kingdom Thowheed Jamath (UKTJ), France Thowheed Jamath (FRTJ), and Australia Thowheed Jamath (ATJ).

*Despite immediate and vigorous denials, it is important to note that NTJ was once part of Sri Lanka Thowheed Jamath (SLTJ); this is also confirmed by this 23 April 2019 article by Middle East Media Research Institute.

At 13:45, a seventh blast occurred at the New Tropical Inn in Dehiwela, near the national zoo, killing two people. At least 250 people were killed and more than 500 were seriously injured in these seven bombings.

One half hour later, at 14:15, an eighth bombing occurred in the Colombo suburb of Dematagoda, when police officers executed a breach and clear warrant at the palatial home of Ilham Ahmed Ibrahim, one of the Shangri-La Hotel bombers. As they approached the house, Ilham's pregnant wife, Fatima, detonated an explosive vest, destroying the entire villa, and killing



Madrasahs.

all three police officers, herself, her unborn child, their three children and Ilham's sister.

At 08:30 on the morning of 22 April 2019, a van parked near St. Anthony's Church in Colombo exploded. The vehicle detonated while police were attempting to safely defuse it. Fortunately, no one was hurt in this explosion.

On Friday afternoon, 26 April 2019, as Sri Lankan security forces approached a suspected NTJ / Islamic State safe house in the southeastern town of Sammanthurai (part of Kalmunai),

the father and two brothers of Mohamed Cassim Mohamed Zahran, aka Mohammed Zaharan, aka Zahran Hashim, leader of the NTJ and Shangri-La bomber, began detonating explosives and started a fierce gun battle, which ended early on Saturday morning.

Fifteen people were killed (all relatives of Zaharan), but no law enforcement or military personnel were seriously injured. In the aftermath, police found more than 150 sticks of plastic explosives (probably TATP), trigger devices, chemicals and about 100,000 ball bearings* in the house.

Bangladesh, India, the Maldives and Pakistan (all known centers of Salafi Islamic activism).

Training Ground

On the same day, a 10-acre NTJ training camp was discovered by Sri Lankan police in the eastern town of Kattankudy, where *Jihadis* linked to the Easter Day attacks are believed to have practiced their shooting and bomb-making skills.

On 11 May 2019, Sri Lanka's army commander Mahesh Senanayake declared that the threat of more terror attacks had

The **current leader of AQIS** is **Pakistani-born jihadist Asim Umar** (aka Asim Umer, aka Maulana Asim Umar, aka Sanaul Haq)

*Pictures of the bombings show hundreds of uniform-sized holes in the church walls.

On 22 April 2019, the government of Sri Lanka declared a national state of emergency, granting police and the military extensive powers to detain and question terrorism suspects without court orders, and on 27 April 2019, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena banned the NTJ and Jamathei Millathu Ibrahim (JMI) under the emergency regulations that came into effect five days earlier.

On 5 May 2019, as part of the ongoing national emergency, Sri Lanka announced that it was conducting a 'security crackdown' by tightening visa restrictions for religious teachers, while adding that it had already expelled at least 200 'Islamic preachers,' along with 600 foreign nationals, mainly from

been contained, and that the security services had dismantled most of the network linked to the Easter bombings. In addition, while investigators had established that the plotters had links to ISIS, authorities were still trying to establish how deep those contacts were. He also observed that *"up to now the investigations do not go beyond many areas, so we don't have to worry about the situation; it is controllable, it is contained."*

Finally, on 14 May 2019, at least four sources revealed that Aadhil Ameer, a 24-year-old Sri Lankan software engineer, had been arrested on suspicion of providing technical and logistical support to the NTJ bombers, and that he had been monitored three years earlier by Indian intelligence agencies,



for suspected recruiting and fundraising activities linked to the Islamic State.

Connecting The Dots - N. M. Ameen Spills The Beans

On November 9, 2016, Muslim Council of Sri Lanka (MCSL) President N. M. Ameen made the following public announcement:

“The Thableeq Jamath [Tablighi Jamaat], Sunnath Jamath [Tamil Nadu Sunnath Jamaat], Thowheed Jamath and Jamaathe Islam [Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and/or Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan] and several other organisations are all Muslim religious and social service organisations. They do not promote any form of violence as implied by the Minister Rajapaksa. Certain parts of his statement are verbatim of the hate speech spewed by the extremist priest Ven. Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara Thero.”

In hindsight, this statement is very revealing, because in his effort to insulate these Deoband-linked Jamath (= Jamaat) groups from being investigated for suspected links to *Jihad* activity, Ameen (perhaps inadvertently) confirmed that they were all closely affiliated with one another. As can be seen now, Ameen’s emphatic assertion that these groups ‘do not promote any kind of violence’ was terribly misleading.

Aftermath - AQIS Targets The Indian Subcontinent

A 2 May 2019 article entitled *Islamic State Planning ‘New Strategy’ To Target Smaller Countries*, proposes that an emerging IS battlefield will be in South Asian countries. Other recent articles discussing this emerging IS / AQIS threat include the 5 May 2019 article entitled *The Next Islamic State Battlefield Will Be in South Asia*, and the 14 May 2019 article entitled *A Network Of Extremism Expands*.

The **Easter Day Bombings** highlight the threat of **AQIS**, and its roster of loyal **Deoband-linked groups**, which are operating across the **entire Indian subcontinent**

If this premise is correct, then two important questions must be asked: [1] **How did we get to this point**, and [2] **What can be done?**

Question One: How did we get to this point?

On 3 September 2014, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, who is globally recognised as the Emir of the original Al-Qaeda (AQ), announced the formation of a new AQ branch, which is called Al-Qaeda of the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), *aka Qaedat Al-Jihad Fi Shibhi Al-Qarrat Al-Hindiya*.

During his 55-minute announcement, Al-Zawahiri, who has been a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) since 23 September 2001, stated that the purpose of AQIS was to “*wage Jihad against its enemies, to liberate its land, to restore its sovereignty, and to revive its Caliphate*.”

Less than five years later, the AQIS coalition has numerous affiliated groups operating in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (including Kashmir), Bangladesh, and Myanmar (Burma).

The current AQIS leader is Pakistani-born *Jihadist* Asim Umar (*aka* Asim Umar, *aka* Maulana Asim Umar, *aka* Sanaul Haq), who is openly loyal to Al-Zawahiri, and has also been a SDGT since 5 July 2016.

As the AQIS leader, his goal is to help the Taliban (a Deoband organisation) re-conquer and take control of



Afghanistan, while also expanding the influence of AQIS throughout the entire Indian subcontinent.

Eight years after Osama bin Laden was killed (on 11 May 2011), AQIS is attracting Deoband-linked *Jihadist* groups across the

Indian subcontinent. This trend intensified immediately after Al-Zawahiri's September 2014 announcement, when the US-led international coalition in Iraq and Syria began encountering thousands of *Jihad* fighters from Central Asia.

For example, in January of 2019, the Central Asian terrorist group *Katibat Al-Tawhid Wal-Jihad* (KTJ) publicly renewed its original 2015 pledge of Bayah (Loyalty) to Ayman Al-Zawahiri. And, while it is true that IS has lost its caliphate and may



Protesters carry al-Qaeda flags during an anti-government protest in Idlib province, Syria.

no longer have a secure base of operations in the Middle East (Syria and Iraq), it is still dangerous, and more than capable of reaching out to cause mayhem in countries thousands of miles away, as we saw in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019.

Meanwhile, on 18 May 2018, Al-Zawahiri announced that US President Donald Trump's 6 December 2017 decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to relocate America's embassy there, was evidence that negotiations and "appeasement" had failed the Palestinians, and urged Muslims to carry out *Jihad* against the United States.

On 23 August 2018, Al-Zawahiri called for the global Islamic *Ummah* (Community) to unite in *Jihad* against the "international infidel alliance" and to "fight against the tyranny of the infidels." The NTJ bombers used some of the same language in their declarations, as confirmed on 23 April 2019, when the IS issued the following statement on Telegram:

"A security source to Amaq [News] Agency: Those that carried out the attack that targeted members of the **US-led Coalition and Christians** in Sri Lanka the day before yesterday are Islamic State group fighters."

On 11 September 2018, Al-Zawahiri described America as the main enemy of Muslims all over the world, and encouraged Muslims to fight *Jihad* against the US and its allies on different fronts, as part of a unified strategy to wear down America and the West [= the Crusader Coalition] until they are defeated and repelled from all Islamic countries.

From the perspective of **sovereignty and national security, cooperative monitoring of the Deoband madrassas** operating throughout the world is a wise, necessary step

The AQIS Code of Conduct

To continue, the primary goal (strategy) and the authorised tactics of this ominous new coalition of Deoband-linked *Jihadist* organisations, which includes the NTJ in Sri Lanka, are plainly described in a 20-page document, known as the **Code of Conduct**, which was released by AQIS (in English) in June of 2017.

Just as with the Muslim Brotherhood's 1991 strategic document entitled *An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Brotherhood in North America* (aka the Explanatory Memorandum), the *Code of Conduct* reveals the precise goals of AQIS, the Sharia- authorised methods (tactics) to accomplish these goals, and exactly how they intend to fight against any opposition to these goals.

In summary, the *Code of Conduct* is an explicit warning to the West, which should be taken literally (at face value) by those who wish to defend sovereignty and liberties from the influence of the Global Islamic Movement.

Focus On Deoband Madrassas

Question Two: What can be done? Worldwide Focus Turns To Deoband Madrassas (aka Madaris)

In the weeks since the Sri Lanka bombings, another development has confirmed the assertions

made in the May 2019 DSA article, *Madrassas Ingrained Worldwide*.

Fortunately, it appears that analysts and members of the international intelligence community have begun to realise that the core of the 'nuclear reactor' of the Salafi, pro-*Jihad*, pro-Sharia Global Islamic Movement (GIM), especially in the Indian subcontinent, is centered within the extensive Deoband madrassa (madari) network.

Some earlier (pre-Sri Lanka) examples include the 11 April 2013 research paper entitled *Balochistan - The State Versus the Nation*, which notes a 'vast network of Deobandi madrassas,' the 27 March 2014 discussion of Deoband madrassas, which 'boasts the largest network of satellite madrassas all over Pakistan, Bangladesh, neighboring countries in Asia and beyond, and as far afield as the Caribbean, South Africa, Britain, and the United States,' a June 2015 article entitled *Religious Education of Pakistan's Madaris and Radicalisation*, and a 23 March 2019 article entitled *Terrorism Fears As 3,000 UK Children A Year Go To 'Jihadi' Schools In Pakistan, Secret Government Report Reveals*.

Subsequent to the Sri Lanka bombings, several more articles have expressed concern about Deoband madrassas, including a 29 April 2019 post entitled

Pakistan Says It Will Take Over 30,000 Madrassas, a 4 May 2019 piece entitled *Secret Government Report Warns Over 48 British Islamic Schools Are Teaching Intolerance And Misogyny To Future Imams*, and a 6 May 2019 article entitled *The Terrorist Ties That Bind*.

At the same time, national security agencies in the subcontinent have declared their intention to assertively monitor the Deoband madrassas in their countries. Examples include a 5 May 2019 article entitled *Sri Lanka Expels 200 Islamic Clerics After Easter Attacks*, the 7 May 2019 story entitled *Islamic Elementary Schools Teaching Taliban Curriculum*, a 9 May 2019 piece entitled *Pakistan Islamic School Reforms Aim to Curb Extremism*, and a 22 May 2019 article entitled *Pulwama Attack, Sri Lanka Blasts Strengthened Resolve To Fight Terror*.

Expected Consequences - More Jihad Attacks

From the perspective of sovereignty and national security, cooperative monitoring of the Deoband madrassas operating throughout the world is a wise, necessary step.

However, as stated plainly in Section XIII of the *Code of Conduct*, one should be prepared for a violent response. As seen ahead, AQIS members consider themselves the guardians of the *Ulamaa* (Scholars) and the *Madaris* (Madrassas), and as plainly stated in XIII-4, they will become a 'strong force' (for *Jihad*). Any effort to reform or oversee their madrassas will be met with fierce opposition and resistance, *aka Jihad*.

Conclusion

The 21 April 2019 Easter Day Bombings have forced us to acknowledge the emerging

Section XIII: Our Stance Regarding 'Ulamaa and Policy in Dealing with them

We consider the 'ulamaa and the madaris in the region, to be the primary force of the movement against the system of infidelity, and of the jihad for the establishment of khilafah; and regarding them, we believe the following measures are essential:

1. The 'ulamaa are the leaders of an Islamic society. The implementation of Shari'ah and establishment of an Islamic society is only possible in obedience to them, and under their guidance. We consider honoring them and getting them their rightful place in society to be our responsibility, so that they can implement Allah's Shari'ah and save The Book of Allah, from becoming dependent on the parliament.
2. The Jama'ah considers defending the scholars (especially scholars who stand up for the truth) and madaris, its foremost duty. In this regard, it will defend them from any kind of governmental or non-governmental aggression, and—according to its capabilities—it will take revenge, in-sha-Allah, for any kind of oppression committed on them.
3. We will pass the whole journey of Jihad, according to the guidance and supervision of ulama. For this reason, we will continue to maintain strong bonds with honorable 'ulamaa, and consult them in matters concerning Islamic laws, in-sha-Allah.
4. The Jama'ah will become a strong force for scholars and madaris, and provide them the ability to stand firmly, against the English system, in-sha-Allah.
5. The Jama'ah will support in every possible way those scholars who are making any sort of efforts for reforming and educating the society; and upon gaining dominance on any land, will also become their political and financial supporter, in-sha-Allah.
6. The Jama'ah wishes to get scholars and students join the ranks of the mujahideen, so that they can guide our jihad towards religious, as well as worldly success.
7. As for the evil scholars who prevent the masses from the Shari'ah of Muhammad ﷺ, and fill their own stomachs with the fire of Hell, by selling their knowledge for petty wealth and goods of this world, we will uncover their real face to the people. We will reply to their government fatwas in the light of Islamic knowledge. Even though, they have caused greater injury to the hearts of mujahideen in the way of Allah than what Kuffaar and apostates have, we will desist from killing or arresting them until we have proof, that they are actively taking part in the fight against the establishment of Shari'ah.

CODE OF CONDUCT - AL-QAEDA IN THE SUBCONTINENT 17

threat of AQIS, and its nearly endless roster of dedicated Salafi Deoband-linked groups, including Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Jamaat ul-Ahrar, Jamaat-ul-Mujahedeen, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Tablighi Jamaat, Tamil Nadu Sunnath Jamaath, Tehrik-e-Taliban Balochistan, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Thowheed Jamaat, and the Taliban.

These groups are not only operating as overlapping coalitions across the entire Indian subcontinent, but are also closely

affiliated to the global Muslim Brotherhood network, and to the kaleidoscopic web of intertwined AQ / IS organisations.

To effectively counter the stated goals of this powerful new international coalition, counter-terrorism experts, intelligence agencies and policy-makers around the world should take the clear Sharia-based statements found in the AQIS **Code of Conduct** to heart, and take steps to augment this threat by paying much closer attention to the global network of **Deoband madrassas**. 