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Redefine the Concept of Lone Wolf in The Context of Global Jihad

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to conceptualize or redefine the concept of "lone wolf" in the context of global jihad. This article uses a meta-analysis approach by proposing two literature review methods, namely an effort to track a number of literatures that are the basis for defining lone wolf acts of terrorism and tracking a number of literatures that discuss the phenomenon of global jihad. This article finds that there are no acts of global jihad terrorism that operate independently, technological developments have pushed the global jihad agenda by Islamic activism on a local scale through social media as an instrument of mobilization and communication without having to interact directly. Therefore, this article concludes that the concept of global jihad glocalization is more appropriately used to refer to acts of terrorism carried out independently by Islamic-based terrorism groups rather than using the term "lone wolf". For this reason, the glocalization of global jihad in the process of ideological doctrine or the process of becoming radicalized is no longer conventional but runs in virtual spaces of social media.

Keywords: lone wolf, terrorism, global Jihad, Glocalization.

INTRODUCTION

A history of the world in the 21st century is colored by acts of terrorism based on religion. This terrorism group uses religion as a political instrument to achieve its goals by means of violence and terror. Al-Qaeda and ISIS are the two organizations most highlighted as waves of religious terrorism that carry a global jihad agenda to form an Islamic-based government system in the form of the Khilafah or Islamic State. The militant struggle to establish an Islamic state has never stopped even though the main

leaders of the organization have died. The deaths of Osama bin Laden in 2011 and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2019 show no sign that acts of religious-based terrorism will stop. Instead, thoughts or ideologies continue to be developed through various media propaganda instruments to maintain the coherence and consistency of the existing support network (Rumman, 2021: 36-38).

ISIS and al-Qaeda are two organizations differ fundamentally on whom they see as their main enemy, which strategies and tactics to use in

attacking that enemy, and which social issues and other concerns to emphasize. But they have the same goal of establishing the Islamic Khilafah or Islamic State (Byman & Williams, 2015). Therefore, the declaration of an Islamic state by ISIS not only provided a new spirit and motivation for global jihad but also has become sectarian war because the primary target of the Islamic State has not been the United States, but rather apostate regimes in the Arab world—namely, the Assad regime in Syria, the Abadi regime in Iraq and attacking Shia and other religious minorities as well as rival jihadist groups (Lakitsch, 2018; Zuhdi et.al, 2020; Byman & Williams, 2015)

Rohan Gunaratna predicts that after the destruction of the ISIS, the threat of global jihad terrorism will experience a shift on a local scale (2018,1). Hassan Abu Hanieh in "The Future of Global Jihadism: Trends and Approaches" said that since the loss of the last ISIS enclave in 2019 there has been a shift in the approach of the ISIS followers' jihad movement from centralization to decentralization (Rumman, 2021:270). In this case, the global jihad movement by groups affiliated with ISIS and al-Qaida is encouraged to play local issues as a strategy for mobilizing the jihad struggle strategy for the purpose of global jihad. Therefore, the fall of ISIS power does not

necessarily make the global jihad disappear. However, the phenomenon of global jihad terrorism is spreading on a local scale and forming new cells that are difficult to predict and detect.

The phenomenon of global jihad globalization is in line with ISIS' call to carry out jihad actions anywhere without having to join ISIS directly. This strategy has succeeded in awakening terrorism network cells to carry out terror acts autonomously on a local scale in various parts of the world, including in Indonesia. Finally, the President of the United States, Obama in 2011 stated referred to lone wolf terrorism as "the most likely scenario that we have to guard against." (CNN,2017). Since then, increase in lone wolf incidents post-9/11 and the term "lone wolf" has become a new trend in the vocabulary of terrorism. Therefore, the concept of the lone wolf has begun to become the focus of attention for US security policies in anticipation of facing domestic security threats from terrorist attacks.

Hamm and Spaaij (2017, 1) describe the phenomenon of the emergence of acts of domestic terrorism with the term "the age lone wolf terrorism. "A lone wolf understood as a "lone wolf terrorism" refers to terrorist actions carried out by lone individuals, as opposed to those carried out on the part of terrorist

organizations or state bodies (Haam and Spaii, 2017:5).

Jeffrey D Simon (2013:266-277) said that these lone wolf models are very dangerous because they are very innovative and creative because there is no group decision-making process, so they are basically free to act on any scenario they think of. In general, the lone wolf has the characteristics of acting alone or more, is not part of a large terrorist group or network so that it is difficult to identify, its modus operandi is understood and regulated by individuals without any command.

If large group of terrorism such as ISIS presents a cruel, fierce but concrete and massive figure, the lone wolf can appear anywhere, anytime. It associated with anyone with a personal. Lone Wolf terrorists have no affiliation with terrorist organization networks. They have never met the terrorist group and, reversely, the group has also never trained him/her in training camps to get lesson on how to carry out terror attacks like Al-Qaeda or ISIS attacks.

The attack pattern called "lone wolf" is believed to have taken place in several countries, such as hostages at Lindt Cafe, Sydney, Australia, 2014, shooting in the office of Charlie Hebdo magazine in France, 2015 and vehicle attacks in several cities in London- United Kingdom, 2017.

Likewise in Indonesia, according to Anindya study (2016), the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia believed that lone wolf appeared in several cases such as suicide bombing by Nur Rohman in Mapolresta Solo, 2016, a suicide bombing at the St Yosep Stasi Church in Medan by Ivan Armadi in Medan, 2016 and Surabaya Bomb Terror, 2018. In addition, the terror incident at the Indonesian Police Headquarters in April 2021 is also categorized as a lone wolf terror (Kompas, 2021).

The lone wolf phenomenon is not only carried out by global jihad terrorist groups, but also becomes a strategy for terror attacks by right-wing terrorism. On 9 March 2019, in Selandia Baru a 28-year-old Australian white supremacist murdered 51 people during Friday prayers at the Al Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre in Christchurch, deadly attacks in the United States (Poway, California, on 27 April, and in El Paso, California, on 3 August), Norway (in Bærum, a suburb of Oslo, on 18 August) and in Germany (Halle, on 9 October).

The use of the term "lone wolf" to understand acts of terrorism carried out individually tends to reduce the problem of terrorism. Terrorism, even though there is no universally agreed definition, is understood as acts of terror which are associated with crimes that committed

systematically, organized, planned and resulting of random civilian casualties. Thus, are we going to say that the so-called "lone wolf" is not an act of terrorism because there is no group or agency (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2011:115-126). On that basis, the use of the term "lone wolf" obscures the understanding of the threat of terrorism.

The definition of the lone wolf which refers to the notion of acts of terrorism that are carried out independently or autonomously is a concept that is not basic and hasty in understanding the dynamics of global terrorism today. Therefore this study looks to fill this gap in the research through examining lone wolf terrorism perpetrated in the name of the global jihadist movement. This paper tries to answer question what is the concept of "lone wolf" applied to the global jihadist movement.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research used qualitative method with critical security study approach with meta-analysis. Data obtained for this research is taken from secondary resources such as journal, report, newspaper that are open publicly.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The Lone Wolf Concept

The term Lone Wolf was popularized by the FBI which in the 90's

that later made a "lone wolf" operation to capture Alex Curtis and Tom Metzger as pioneers of "white supremacists" or white superminations. For Alex Curtis and Tom Metzger campaigned for fellow racists in America and act solely for planning to use of biological weapons to destroy other races. Acting alone was to prevent arrests of other members and made it easier for conducting a crime without compared in the in the form of a group. Alex Curtis popularized five words when he was caught "I have nothing to say" which later descibed as lone wolf. Tom Megzer also developed a stand-alone, leaderless struggle with individual cells that had nothing to do with an organization. Therefore, lone wolf terrorism is not new to the world.

The lone wolf conceptualization is a term that was first used as a strategy for US domestic security policy in dealing with the threat of domestic terrorism in the 70-90s. But this lone wolf concept became famous when President Barack Obama announced that a lone wolf terrorist strike in the United States is more likely than a major coordinated effort like the 9/11 attacks (Hamm & Spaaij, 2017;1). Therefore, the turning point of the history of lone wolf is the phenomenon of the collapse of the power of Al-Qaeda and ISIS which regenerated the term "lone wolf" in the vocabulary of terrorism.

In the context of global jihad, Sageman (2008:125-146) used the term "Leaderless Jihad" to describe the phenomenon of a terror revival that grew from below without a chain of organizational command, autonomous and not affiliated with the existing network of terrorist organizations. The definition of the lone wolf which refers to the notion of acts of terrorism that are carried out independently or autonomously is a concept that is not basic and hasty in understanding the dynamics of global terrorism today. In addition to lone wolf, there are several terms to be considered, for example Kushner and Hewitt use the term "freelance terrorism" to describe individuals who commit acts of terror that are not part of members of large terrorist organizations (Kushner, 2003:144-145, Hewitt,2003:79). Daniel Pipes (2006), Director of the Middle East America Forum, in his article called the term "sudden jihad syndrome" to describe the phenomenon of the emergence of Muslim individuals acting independently of terrorists

The notion of lone wolf has received the attention of some experts, for example: Jeffrey D. Simon (2013:266-277) who gives the meaning of lone wolf as:

“The use or threat of violence or nonviolent sabotage, including cyber attacks, against government,

society, business, the military, or any other target by an individual acting alone or with minimal support from one or two other people, to further a political, social, religious, financial or other related goal, or, when not having such an objective, nevertheless has the same effect, or potential effect, upon government, society, business, or the military in terms of creating fear and/or disrupting daily life and/or causing government, society, business, or the military to react with heightened security and/ or other response”

While Simon explained of how to lone wolf committed a violent act that is not connected with terrorist organizations, Ramon Spaaij (2014:856) defined lone wolf as: “terrorists who carry out attacks individually and independently from established terrorist organizations.” However, Spaaij provides a further explanation that there is a possibility that a lone wolf may interact with others during the radicalization process and may even have received training or institutional support in the past.

In his book *Leaderless Jihad*, Marc Sageman (2008:125-146) discusses this new phenomenon by defining it as "leaderless actors" namely individuals who carry out attacks on behalf of Al

Qaeda but without a direct affiliation with Al Qaeda groups. Sageman was indirectly referring to lone wolf that can lead to the meaning of the actors and small cells that operate without a higher authority structure.

Some researchers also questioned whether small cells consisting of two or three people who carried out attacks on their own directions could be categorized as a lone wolf. There are two different views to addressing this question, some researchers consider small cells (consisting of two or three) not included in the lone wolf phenomenon (Borum, Fein & Vossekuil, 2012: 389–396). However, there are also researchers who consider acts of terror carried out by a small number of individuals, namely two or three, can be categorized as lone wolf terrorism (Gill, Horgan & Deckert, 2014: 425–435).

Some of the definitions above indicate that no universal understanding of lone wolf. However, there are several elements consistence to reflect lone wolves, such as the lack of direction from large organizational groups and the lack of clear command and control from some lone wolf actors that separated from the terrorist network.

The lone wolf phenomenon as mentioned earlier is closely related to the current development of utilization of

social media instruments by terrorist network. Social media is not only seen as a driver or an accelerator to the development of the lone wolf phenomenon, but also includes the process of indoctrination, teaching and an individual conditioning that called as Self-Radicalization. Jeffry D. Simon (2013:15) said more explicitly that the phenomenon of lone wolf was a new wave of terrorism that emerged along with the development of technological progress so that social space replaced with virtual space and the internet was the driving force in carrying out acts of terror.

The phenomenon of the lone wolf is more difficult to prevent than acts of terrorism in general because of its isolated act and autonomous nature decision so that it is complicated to recognize its roots, and it is difficult to carry out pre-emptive actions (Bakker & de Graaf, 2011:43-48). The lone wolf phenomenon appears along with the rising trend of using social media in the community. Social media becomes the drivers of particular individual doctrines to be radical. Kumar Ramakrishna believes that "lone wolf" terrorists are generally young people who have undergone a process of radicalization due to absorbing various information about the extreme ideologies of many sites and social media scattered on the Internet network (Ramakrishna, 2014). The threat

of "lone wolf" is a global phenomenon that grows along with the development of social media. Therefore, the counter-terrorism strategy in dealing with lone wolf action according to Ramakrishna requires 5 (five) social media-based strategies including recipient, sender, message, mechanism, and context.

The Global Jihadist Movement

The term "jihad" in Islamic nomenclature must not be understood in the framework of foreign idea of Islam. The term jihad is often found in Islamic doctrine (Al-Qur'an and Hadith) with various interpretations (Afsaruddin, 2013). However, since the WTC bomb attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the term jihad tends to get a general understanding as a concept that is fiber with a culture of violence. Bassam Tibi (2014, 48) uses the term Islamism to refer to the use of violence that is claimed as jihad as a manifestation of the politicization of religion.

Historically, the emergence and development of the global movement of jihad cannot being separated from essential events in the history of the political arena of the Islamic world. There are three crucial events in the arena of Islamic politics that underline the global revival of jihad., namely first, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, second, the invasion of

the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and third, the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel which is viewed by radical Muslim activists as a form of pro-Western regime policy. These three events have become a momentum for the global revival of jihad by Islamic extremist groups, which are rapidly spreading across the Middle East, Asia, Africa, the Caucasus, the Balkan Gulf to Eastern Europe.

This marks the birth of a global wave of jihad. The global organization of jihad moves underground and alienates itself from the community. Oliver Roy calls it "deterritorialization," that is meant to a group living nomadically, not settling in a place and not having an emotional bond with their homeland or homeland (Roy, 2004). The jihadist group has powerful principles and beliefs, namely "Jihad and the rifle alone; no negotiations, no conferences, and no dialogues." The jihadist group does not know the term compromise or dialogue with the enemy. Mujahideen groups feel that if the occupation of Western countries over an Islamic state takes place through deception and perceived dialogue or negotiation, it will only be a waste of time. Dialogue is not possible if the result is predictable, namely the victory of the West who is accustomed to deceive Muslims.

Al-Qaeda was the first global jihad organization in the early 21st century which declared on February 23, 1998, entitled "Islamic World Front to Jihad against Jews and Crusaders" (Gunaratna, 2003:45). According, As'ad Said Ali (2014:90-92) the global declaration of jihad was signed by Osama bin Laden (Saudi Arabia), Ayman az-Zawahiri (Egypt), Rifa'i Ahmad Thaha (Egypt), Hamzah (Pakistan), Fathurrahman (Pakistan) and Abdus Salam Muhammad (Bangladesh). After al-Qaeda, the most active Islamic-based terrorism organization calling for global jihad is ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). These two organizations became a global phenomenon of jihad and gave birth to a religion-based terrorism discourse with Islamic symbols in action, discourse and movement. After al-Qaeda, the most active Islamic-based terrorism organization calling for global jihad is ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). These two organizations became a global phenomenon of jihad and gave birth to a religion-based terrorism discourse with Islamic symbols in action, discourse and movement.

McCauley and Moskalenko (2014,70) provide four general identifications of the operationalization of the global jihad movement:

- 1) Islam is under attack by Western crusaders led by the United States;
- 2) Jihadis, whom the West refers to as "terrorists," are defending against this attack;
- 3) The actions they take in defense of Islam are proportional, just, and religiously sanctified; and therefore;
- 4) It is the duty of good Muslims to support these actions

With these criteria in mind, it could be argued that Islamic-based terrorism, ISIS and Al-Qaeda have concept of solidarity, which is known as *ukhuwah islamiyah* ideology. This concept makes ISIS and Al-Qaeda different from secular terrorist organizations. The concept of *ukhuwah islamiyah* is an Islamic brotherhood which gets a transcendental interpretation as part of the faith power and strong spirituality, which God gives to His faithful and pious servants who foster feelings of compassion, brotherhood, glory and mutual trust in a brother.

The concept of *ukhuwah islamiyah* used by the global activism of jihad had utilized a framing framework through Islamic symbols in their actions and discourses in order to provide tendentious and Islamic radical interpretations to fulfil their own political agenda. Asef Bayat

(2005) borrowed the term “Imagined community” Benedict Anderson, to introduce the concept of “imagined solidarity.” This concept is used by Bayat to see how individual participants of Islamic activism movements with different backgrounds and minds are different, but have the same goal of forming a common consensus to take radical action.

In the global context of jihad, the movement of global jihad action aftermath the destruction of ISIS in 2017 has transformed into an individualized random attack. It is further acknowledged by the media as a lone wolf terrorist act. ‘Lone Wolf’ is a new term in the modern terrorism in the 21st century. The terminology mention is well known throughout the world and considered a new style of strategy and method for the global action of ISIS jihad.

In that context, the use of the term lone wolf to understand the global phenomenon of jihad has reduced global understanding of jihad. Global jihad will not be completed only with the destruction of the organization and forces against ISIS and Al-Qaeda. Global jihad is a joint consensus that is united through the common goal of the Islamic state. The development of technology, especially social media, has become a new instrument and strategy to mobilize the

masses through tendentious and radical narratives to fulfil the agenda of upholding Islamic *da'wah*.

In this context, the destruction of ISIS has given birth to new jihadists on a local scale to carry out the global agenda of jihad. Roland Robertson (1995:25-30) uses the term "glocalization" to describe forms of local adjustment to the global situation. The Glocalization theory of Roland Robertson would be very relevant to explain the emergence of the phenomenon of fundamentalist movements in the form of acts of terror carried out by individuals, moving themselves without affiliation with large groups (Robertson, 1992:10).

Glocalization of global jihad seems more natural to do than relying on systematic attack that heavily rely upon the leadership commands. It utilizes advance technology such as social media to mobilize the masses, to gather support and to justify action carry out in the concept of global jihad glocalization. In Indonesia, the phenomenon of global jihad glocalization appears from the movement of terrorist organizations such as the Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), and Jamaah Islamiyah (JI). ISIS and Al Qaeda are strongly influence these groups’ perspective and action, despite their lack of structural relationship. This

distinguishes Islamic and Non-Islamic based terrorist organizations. In addition, a number of jihadist groups differ fundamentally in strategies and tactics to use in attacking that enemy, and which social issues and other concerns to emphasize, but all jihadist groups share the same vision of creating an Islamic state or application of sharia by country.

Islamic-based terrorism has a hallmark of Islamic Brotherhood, namely the doctrine of the unity of Muslims in the world through the global jihad agenda so that with different backgrounds they can unite the ideas including the ideas of radicalism and terrorism. This phenomenon later expanded by utilizing social media to mobilize support and justify the global action of jihad in violent ways. In the context of social media, the terrorist movement towards globalization utilizes social media to influence sympathizers by building hate narratives against infidels and the government which is considered *thagut* on social media. In Indonesia the mobilization of funds for terrorism activities is carried out online (Sukoco, Syauqilah dan Ismail, 2021:6). In fact, terrorist financing has grown by using cryptocurrency as a funding medium. The funding flow with cryptocurrencies has three distinct entities: play a role in funding, namely terrorism organizations, senders and

cryptocurrency exchange platforms (Prasetyo, Subroto and Nurish, 2021:10)

Changes in a social structure with the emergence of social media make jihadists communicate through virtual spaces without having to interact directly within existing terrorist organizations (Meloy & Yakeley, 2014). Thus, the process of becoming radical does not require to physically join the existing terrorist organizations, but is sufficiently covered through religious studies on social media. The main actor of the global jihad agenda is enough to provide religious content with tendentious and radical interpretations.

Finally, the phenomena of global jihad such as the al-Qaeda, ISIS, JAD, JAT, JI, and forms of global jihad in the 21st Century are not all the same in strategies and tactics, but are all the same to establish an Islamic state based on Sharia law.

Therefore, the phenomenon that is indicated as lone wolf does not have a strong basis argument. In the midst of technological developments, social space has been replaced virtually so that the concept of jihadists changes in terms of strategy and method. By building shared communication through social media; the concept of jihadist is changing, which further annualized the concept of action alone or lone wolf. Therefore, the

deradicalization program must also follow the development of acts of terrorism with a counter-narrative approach in cyberspace to deal with the threat of terrorism called cyberterrorism (Huda, 2019:4)

CONCLUSION

Historically, the idea of the lone wolf emerged in the regime of domestic security policy thought, especially in Europe and America in order to face the threat of attacks by right-wing extremism which in the 1970s used single actor instruments as an action strategy to achieve goals. Therefore, the genealogy of the lone conception comes from a specific regime of thought and is localized into the understanding of the relationship of western liberal democracy with the ideology of right-wing movements in the West. Thus, If “lone wolf” emerges and works through local discursive systems, the question arises whether this concept is appropriate to use in the global jihad movement? This is because global jihadist movements such as al-Qaeda and ISIS have a different character from right-wing terrorism in Western countries in their actions, discourses and movements. According to Carson (2016, 453) lone wolf activity perpetrated by the global jihadist movement was relatively rare in Afghanistan from 1997 to 2013. In general,

global jihad terrorism is a much more organized and complex endeavor, more often involving multiple offenders.

In addition, the idea that the lone wolf concept is an act of violence that is carried out individually or singly without going through communication with the outside world as stated by Spaaij and Hamm (2015, 167-178) is a premise of thinking that is not right or can be wrong. This is because the development of the internet world through social media instruments has provided space for the lone wolf radicalization process and the development of the operationalization of acts of terrorism. As stated by Smith and Talbot (2019, 100) that the online environment has been used as an instrument of socialization, recruitment and radicalization. Finally, further studies are needed on the lone wolf thinking which is not limited to the lone wolf phenomenon in European and American countries so that the lone wolf concept is not just a globalized local discourse that has become popular since 2011 when President Barack Obama made the lone wolf phenomenon a serious threat. post 9/11. A comprehensive study is expected to draw the concept of “lone wolf” rooted in Western imaginations is applied to the glocalization global jihad.

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