

SUMMARY OF CASE AGAINST JEMAAH ISLAMIYAH (SINGAPORE)

Chronology of Investigations and Developments

The first specific lead that the Internal Security Department (ISD) received which led to the operation against the clandestine organisation known as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI, meaning “Islamic Group”) came from a Singaporean. Following the 11 Sep 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, the Singaporean provided information that Mohammad Aslam bin Yar Ali Khan (Aslam), a Singaporean of Pakistani extraction, had claimed to know Al-Qaeda’s leader Osama bin Laden (Osama) and to have fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

2 ISD then mounted surveillance on and investigated Aslam as well as a group of people associated with him. On 4 Oct 2001, Aslam left Singapore suddenly on a flight to Pakistan and was later discovered to have gone to Afghanistan. He was later arrested by the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan.

3 On 3 Dec 2001, the media published a report on Aslam and his arrest in Afghanistan. As the story was likely to attract further media attention, ISD decided to bring forward its operation against Aslam’s associates before they went underground or left the country to escape arrest.

4 ISD’s operation began on 8 Dec 2001. On 9 Dec 2001, ISD detained the first group of 6 persons and searched their houses and offices. Surveillance led to the arrests of others on 15, 16 and 17 Dec; the last person was located and arrested on 24 Dec 2001. A total of 23 persons were picked up for questioning.

5 On 14 Dec 2001, five days after the first JI arrests, the US officers informed ISD when ISD briefed them about a videotape containing footages of the vicinity of Yishun Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) station found in Afghanistan. ISD received a copy of the said videotape and debriefing notes on 28 Dec 2001.

6 Thirteen of the 23 questioned were subsequently confirmed to be active members of the JI and were members or supporters of operations cells within the organisation (see Annex A1 for their particulars). All 13 were involved in profiling and surveillance of targets for terrorist attacks and in procurement of logistics including transport, hiding places and materials for bomb construction.

Jemaah Islamiyah in Singapore

Leadership and Structure

7 The Singapore JI is part of a larger network with cells in Malaysia and Indonesia. The Singapore JI group reports to a Malaysian-based leadership structure called a regional *syurah* (consultative council). The Singapore group itself is led by a “Qoaid Wakalah” (leader) who is in turn advised a *syurah* which comprises of a few senior members. The group has five functional units: Operations, Security, Missionary Work, Economy (fund-raising) and Communications. (See Annex A2 for organisation chart of JI.)

Training

8 Singapore JI members were urged to visit Afghanistan to see the fruits of *jihad*. While there, they learned to handle the AK47, bazookas, mortars, grenades and explosives. At least 8 JI members have gone to Afghanistan for military training. Besides Afghanistan, some Singaporean JI members have attended training sessions in Mindanao in south Philippines conducted by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a militant separatist group.

Security Tradecraft

9 Besides military training, the JI group had sophisticated security tradecraft. For instance, members frequently changed aliases; some had multiple ones. A culture of secrecy of the group and its activities has been inculcated in members from the time of recruitment. Those members involved in operations were given code-names and used code-words in their communications.

Jemaah Islamiyah Operations Cells

10 The most dangerous elements within JI were those assigned to the operations cells. These cells were variously preparing themselves for action. The earliest plans of Singapore JI members to target assets in Singapore for terrorist attack were conceived by the mid-1990s. However, preparations gathered momentum immediately after the terrorist attacks in the US in Sep 2001.

11 Most of the 13 JI detainees belong to one of the following three operations cells -- “Fiah Ayub”, “Fiah Musa” and “Fiah Ismail”. All three operations cells have considered or engaged in planning and preparation for terrorist attacks against targets in Singapore. All three cells see their role as mainly providing logistical and other support to foreign terrorist elements who would determine when and what to attack.

JI's Involvement in Terrorist Plans

12 Singapore JI leaders and members of the operations cells were involved in the following plans to attack targets in Singapore.

Fiah Ayub's Plan of Attack Against US Personnel at Yishun MRT Station

13 Sometime in 1997, detainee Mohamed Khalim bin Jaffar (Khalim) conceived the idea of attacking US personnel at the Yishun MRT station. He knew that US military personnel would usually shuttle between Yishun MRT station and their naval facilities in Sembawang Wharf. Khalim made a detailed reconnaissance of the Yishun MRT station and prepared a videotape of the reconnaissance with an English commentary by fellow Fiah Ayub member and detainee, Hashim bin Abas (Hashim). The videotape and some handwritten debriefing notes in Arabic were later found in the rubble of an Al-Qaeda leader Mohd Atef @ Abu Hafs's house in Afghanistan.

Fiah Musa's Plan of Attack Against US Embassy and Commercial Buildings

14 In Sep/Oct 2001, Fiah Musa was approached by a mixed group of foreign elements to assist in a plan for terrorist bombing against specific targets in Singapore. These foreigners were known to the cell members only by code-names and were introduced to them by a JI *syurah* member (ex-Singaporean now Malaysian) and detainee Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana (Faiz). Two of the foreigners (a Canadian Arab Al-Qaeda member calling himself "Sammy"; the other, an Indonesian calling himself "Mike" is a trainer and bomb-maker with the MILF) came to Singapore in Oct 2001. Assisted by the cell members, they conducted surveillance of several establishments, including the US Embassy, the Australian and British High Commissions and the Israeli Embassy. These footages were downloaded into a VCD which Fiah Musa member Fathi Abu Bakar Bafana (Fathi) labeled "*Visiting Singapore Sightseeing*", an innocuous title he hoped to prevent unauthorised persons, including the Police, from discovering the contents (a copy of this VCD was recovered from his office).

15 "Sammy" and "Mike" told Fiah Musa that a chemical, ammonium nitrate, was required to make the bombs. They wanted up to 21 tonnes of ammonium nitrate. As they already had four tonnes in Malaysia with Faiz, they instructed the cell members to help procure the other 17 tonnes of ammonium nitrate. The Singaporeans were also asked to look for a storage space in Singapore for the ammonium nitrate. Fiah Musa member Mohamed Ellias s/o Mohamed Khan (Ellias) made enquiries and attempted to procure ammonium nitrate through a contact from a local vendor. However, Ellias was arrested before he could seal the deal.

16 ISD believed from investigations that “Mike” could have possessed a Philippines passport and informed the Philippines authorities accordingly. The Philippines took action and has since identified and arrested “Mike”. “Mike” is a 30-year-old Indonesian whose real name is Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi. Fathur is a bomb-maker and terrorist trained by the MILF. Fathur’s capture led to the discovery of 1.2 tonnes of TNT, 300 pieces of detonators, as well as six rolls of detonating cords. Fathur revealed that the explosives were meant for Singapore.

17 In ISD’s assessment, there are about a dozen active JI members who fled the country following the arrests and are likely to be abroad in the region. Among them is the 5-man group led by Mas Selamat Kastari who had threatened to crash a plane into Changi Airport. This group is believed to be in Indonesia at the moment and assessed to be the most dangerous elements in the Singapore JI group.
