

Title : US foreign policy increasing terror threat in Asia: terrorism expert
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SINGAPORE: US foreign policy has increased the level of terrorism in Asia, says a terrorism expert here.

In Southeast Asia, governments need to work with mainstream Muslim leaders to counter the rising extremist ideologies.

As Iraq becomes the bedrock of terrorist activities, the failure of the White House to manage the situation is fuelling terrorist groups in the Asian region, says a terrorism expert.

Dr Rohan Gunaratna, Head, International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, says: "The US invasion of Iraq has increased the threat of terrorism very significantly. As the United States withdraws from Iraq, the threat will grow and will become more significant. So it will require increased international investment in Iraq to stabilise Iraq because terrorist ideologies are also influencing a number of terrorist groups and extremism groups based in Asia."

Speaking at the Regional Outlook Forum organised by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, political think-tanks agreed that terrorist cells in Southeast Asia are more influenced by international events overseas rather than in their own backyard.

The real threat in this region is extremist views, with emerging new cells relying on Al Qaeda's ideology of global Jihadism and tactics.

"We should get the Muslim clerics working very hard in countering the radical extremism that is spreading in Asia. That means the governments must also work very closely with the clerics and with the religious and the educational establishments to counter the propaganda of terrorist groups," says Dr Gunaratna.

The forum also discussed the rising terror threat in North and Southeast Asia due to growing Islamism in Indonesia, Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand, and how terrorist cell groups are making their training camps mobile and not relying on permanent set-ups to train new recruits. - CNA/so