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Southeast Asia: A Potential Domain for Chemical Terrorism

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Abstract

This research examines the prospect of Southeast Asia as a future domain for chemical terrorism over the next five years by assessing the correlation between the intent and capability of potential actors to conduct chemical terrorism. Additionally, the effectiveness of prevention and mitigation measures of the concerned governments is also examined. Southeast Asian countries have experienced the persistent threat of Islamic violent extremism for decades. The exploitation of chemical weapons (CW) reflects new developments in the methods of committing terrorist acts. Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have demonstrated the intent and capability of chemical terrorism. It is highly likely that Al Qaeda and ISIS will disseminate CW expertise to their affiliates in Southeast Asia that transform the region into a domain for chemical terrorism. The main thesis of this research argues that Southeast Asia will be a potential domain for chemical terrorism within the next five years because the gap that exists between the Islamic extremists' intent to use CW and acquiring a full capability of such weapons has been narrowed down. Lastly, it outlines the conclusion and policy recommendations to mitigate the risk of chemical terrorism in the region.

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