

# Anticipating Islamic State group's next move

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**Oxford Analytica Client Conference Call**  
**Thursday, 3 December, 16:00 UK Time**



## Anticipating Islamic State group's next move

The past month has seen a sudden upsurge in terrorist attacks claimed by Islamic State group (ISG) beyond its main area of operations in Iraq and Syria. The attacks -- in Paris, Beirut, the Sinai, and Tunis -- raise the question of whether ISG has begun a global terrorist campaign. If so, this would represent a significant shift from its previous focus on state-building and sectarian conflict in Iraq and Syria. Is the group's leadership planning such attacks centrally and coordinating a growing network of global affiliates in other countries to synchronize attacks and maximise impact? Or is the initiative coming from local affiliates and supporters who, emboldened by ISG propaganda, are carrying out successful attacks to escalate the violence?

In the second of our special conference calls on the Islamic State group threat we'll examine these and other key questions:

- What is ISG's main goal? What strategy is it following? What are its operational capabilities?
- Where does ISG have the strongest local affiliates and support base?
- How will the competition between ISG and al-Qaida escalate? Will increased rivalry lead to more 'spectacular' attacks?
- How does ISG's strategy differ from al-Qaida's? How does this affect what attacks we might see?
- Where is ISG planning to expand and strengthen its reach?
- What are the implications for security in Asia, Europe, North America, and the Middle East?

## Chair

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### **Paul Maidment, Director of Analysis and Managing Editor, Oxford Analytica**

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Paul Maidment joined Oxford Analytica in December 2014 as the Director of Analysis and Managing Editor of the Oxford Analytica Daily Brief.

He is an award-winning journalist who founded the New York-based digital editorial consultancy Bystander Media in 2010. A pioneer in combining digital and print journalism, he was previously Editor of [Forbes.com](http://Forbes.com) and Executive Editor of Forbes, transforming a magazine website into the leading online destination for business, finance and up-scale lifestyle. Before joining Forbes in 2001, Paul was the founding Editor of the Financial Times' award-winning web site [FT.com](http://FT.com) and Assistant Editor of the newspaper. His early career as an editor and foreign correspondent encompassed The Economist, the Asian Wall Street Journal and the BBC in the U.K. the U.S. and Asia — a depth of journalistic experience and breadth of media that gives him a unique perspective on the changes transforming publishing and the world economy. Paul was inducted into the Digital Hall of Fame in New York in 2010.

### **Panellists will include:**

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### **Philip Mudd, Advisor to SouthernSun Asset Management, Contributing Analyst to CNN**

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Philip Mudd joined the CIA in 1985 as an analyst specializing in South Asia and then the Middle East. He began work in the CIA's Counterterrorist Center in 1992 and was later Deputy National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia (1995-98). In 2001, Mr. Mudd served as Director for Gulf Affairs on the White House National Security Council. He returned to CIA in early 2002 to become second-in-charge of counterterrorism analysis in the Counterterrorist Center and was promoted to Deputy Director (2003-05).

Mr. Mudd was appointed the FBI National Security Branch's first-ever deputy director (2005), and later became Senior Intelligence Adviser. He resigned from government service in March 2010. He has received numerous CIA awards, including the Director's Award; the George H.W. Bush Award for excellence in counterterrorism; the CIA's Distinguished Intelligence Medal, the Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal, and the first-ever William Langer Award for excellence in analysis.

Mr. Mudd has commented about terrorism in open and closed Congressional testimony, and has been featured by ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, BBC, MSNBC, the New York Times, among others. He has written (among others) in Newsweek, the Wall Street Journal, The Atlantic, Foreign Policy, and Sentinel, the journal of the US Military Academy's Combatting Terrorism Center. Author of *Takedown: Inside the Hunt for Al Qaeda* (2013) and *The HEAD Game: High Efficiency Analytic Decision-Making and the Art of Solving Complex Problems Quickly* (2015).

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**Dr Rohan Gunaratna, Professor of Security Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technology University, and Head of International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Singapore**

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Dr Gunaratna received his Masters from the University of Notre Dame in the US where he was Hesburgh Scholar and his doctorate from the University of St Andrews in the UK where he was British Chevening Scholar. A former Senior Fellow at the Combating Terrorism Centre at the United States Military Academy at West Point and at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Gunaratna was invited to testify on the structure of al Qaeda before the 9/11 Commission. The author of 15 books including "Inside al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror" (University of Columbia Press), Gunaratna interviewed terrorists and insurgents in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Saudi Arabia and other conflict zones. For advancing international security cooperation, Gunaratna received the Major General Ralph H. Van Deman Award in June 2014.

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**Harleen Gambhir, Counterterrorism Analyst, Institute for the Study of War**

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Harleen Gambhir focuses on the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham's global strategy and operations. Ms. Gambhir is an expert on ISIS's military campaigns within Iraq and Syria, its media operations, its regional affiliates, and its global terror campaign. Her work primarily deals with ISIS's affiliates in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.