THE EVOLUTION OF LASHKAR-E-TAYYIBA AND THE ROAD TO MUMBAI

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By

Joshua Adlakha, B.A.

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I. Introduction

Though Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) has served as the best organized, best trained, most heavily armed, and indeed most prolific militant organization operating from Pakistan, it only began to garner significant international attention following the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack. In the most brazen terrorist attack since 9/11, a squad of ten militants laid siege to a city of 20 million people for nearly 60 hours and managed to bring India’s financial hub and cultural center to a standstill as the world looked on. Prior to this attack, LeT received relatively little attention even though it had already engaged in dozens if not hundreds of attacks throughout India and built up an extensive network both there and around the globe. Through an extensive study of a wide-array of academic literature and media reports about LeT, this paper presents a case study exploring the evolution of LeT since its inception in the 1980s and seeks bring empirical clarity in understanding the group.

A better understanding of LeT’s evolution carries major implications for U.S. policy since the group poses major challenges to U.S. security interests. First and foremost, stability in South Asia is a key U.S. security interest and will continue to remain so as long as it remains entrenched in Afghanistan. LeT attacks have, on occasion, brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war and the group remains one of the most likely catalysts to war between the two nuclear-armed countries. At the very least, LeT acts as a major source of contention between the two countries and keeps Pakistan’s national security establishment focused on India. This, in turn, distracts Pakistan from stabilizing its tribal regions on its border with Afghanistan complicating U.S. and NATO operations in that country. At worst, a future LeT attack could precipitate in a major war between the two countries that would carry the frightening risk of becoming the world’s first nuclear war. Second, LeT has targeted U.S. forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan. While its foray into Iraq was relatively short-lived, since at least 2006, it has begun to actively support and participate in the insurgency in
Afghanistan. The group has been implicated in several attacks against U.S. forces in Afghanistan and coalition forces consider Lashkar militants among the most effective fighters in the region.\(^1\) Though the group has had little impact on the insurgency thus far, its presence in Afghanistan will likely continue to expand.

Finally, LeT poses a direct threat to the West. With its attack on the Israel-affiliated Jewish Nariman house during the Mumbai siege, LeT operationalized its anti-Israeli ideology for the first time. The Mumbai attackers also slaughtered 26 foreigners including six Americans. While the group has never been implicated in any plots on American soil or specifically targeted American civilians, it has attracted numerous recruits from across the West including the United States and has been linked to several terrorist plots in Europe. For all of these reasons, LeT poses a direct threat to U.S. security interests around the globe. Indeed, the fact that the group continues to operate largely unhindered in Pakistan and has a network spanning the globe makes it a terrorist threat rivaling Al-Qaeda if not surpassing it. Even if LeT does not carry out the next terrorist attack on American soil, the brutal effectiveness of the Mumbai attacks and the global publicity it garnered will likely influence terrorist groups to employ similar style attacks on American soil in the future.

Within Pakistan’s diverse militant landscape LeT occupies a unique position. To begin, with it adheres to the Ahl-e-Hadith school of Islam which is closely related to Wahhabism but diverges substantially from the Deobandism adhered to by most of Pakistan’s other militant groups. In contrast to the Deobandis who make up a substantial minority in Pakistan, the Ahl-e-Hadith comprise only a tiny minority of the country. Furthermore, LeT makes up an even smaller fraction of the Ahl-e-Hadith minority due to its unique interpretation of armed jihad as an imperative upon all Muslims. In a country where it has only a small base and few natural allies, LeT has developed

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and maintained a close relationship with Pakistan’s Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in order to expand its base and protect its infrastructure.

While the ISI has cultivated and supported various different militant organizations in its proxy war against India over the past several decades, LeT has remained by far the most fiercely loyal and pliable group to its interests. Unlike the various Deobandi militant organizations in the country, LeT has never split and its core leadership has remained intact. Furthermore, the group has never turned its weapons on the Pakistani state nor has it ever engaged in sectarian violence targeting the large Shia minority of the country.² For the ISI, LeT has acted as a reliable, consistent, and intensely loyal proxy in contrast to the various Deobandi militant groups which have begun to increasingly target the Pakistani state. Pakistan’s paltry and superficial response to countering the group following the November 2008 Mumbai attacks serves as a testament to the fealty shared between the ISI and LeT.

By exploring the evolution of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, this thesis will argue that Pakistan continues to sustain Lashkar-e-Tayyiba’s operational capabilities in order to preserve it as a strategic asset against India. Furthermore, it will argue that although LeT’s global reach has expanded it continues to focus its efforts on India. It will also suggest that LeT has expanded its strategy to provoking Hindu-Muslim discord in order to both attract recruits and funds as well as create a greater destabilizing impact on India. In order to advance these arguments, this thesis is organized as follows: The next section will discuss the methodology employed in this paper and the data challenges confronting it. The third section will provide an overview of the 2008 Mumbai terror attack and discuss the implications and key questions arising from this attack which will be explored at greater length throughout the paper. The fourth section will investigate the evolution of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba by exploring its unique ideology, evolving organizational structure, changing targeting

patterns and objectives, and expanding recruitment and support networks. It will look at how LeT has changed over time in each of these areas and what factors have driven these changes. The paper will conclude by discussing the major implications of this study.
II. Methodology and Data Caveats

This paper presents a case study of LeT’s evolution in certain areas including its organizational structure, targeting patterns and objectives, and recruitment and support networks. In order to carry out this study, an exhaustive review of academic literature and media reports was conducted. For the 2008 Mumbai attack, including the implications and key questions, information was drawn from a combination of documents released by the Indian government as well as congressional testimony given by experts on South Asia and published academic reports. It was further supplemented from information published in the media. The information drawn from these documents were relatively straightforward. Information on LeT’s ideology was largely taken from secondary academic literature and media reports due to the difficulty in obtaining primary source material, particularly since LeT’s website was taken down shortly after the 2008 Mumbai attacks. LeT’s printed literature is also difficult to obtain outside of Pakistan.

Information on LeT’s organizational structure, leadership, targeting, and recruitment and support networks were also pieced together from a wide array of sources. Fairly extensive data is available on LeT’s organizational activities and structure in published academic literature. This was supplemented with information from media reports in order to ascertain its more recent organizational changes. Information on the leadership and membership of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, however, remains extremely limited due to its historical role as a covert proxy for the ISI. Nevertheless there have been a few published biographies of LeT leadership as well as surveys conducted of its recruiting base. Invariably, however, much of this information derives from LeT sources which may be prone to exaggeration or fabrication for the purposes of serving its organizational goals. In looking at LeT’s recruitment and support networks, the paper will also draw heavily from profiles about individual recruits published in the media. This section will also explore
some of the claims made about LeT’s relationship with other terrorist organizations and particularly with Al-Qaeda which is rife with misconceptions.

Exploring LeT’s targeting patterns and attribution of attacks is highly problematic. These problems are compounded by the fact that LeT has always denied participating in any attacks targeting civilians though the experts overwhelmingly accept that LeT has engaged in such attacks. With ISI training and support LeT has employed elaborate means of denial and deception and sophisticated operational security methods to conceal its activities. These problems are compounded by the fact that India has political incentives to link terrorist attacks to LeT—even if it is unlikely they carried attack—in order to force Pakistan to dismantle its proxy and possibly downplay the presence of domestic terrorism. The Dehli-based South Asia Terrorism Portal has the most extensive list of LeT attack data though most of this information is unverifiable and the think tank is often perceived as presenting the viewpoints of the Indian government.  

For these reasons, coupled with the fact that very few of LeT’s Pakistani operatives have been captured alive, many of the alleged LeT attacks cannot definitively be attributed to the group. Indeed, the November 2008 Mumbai attack was an extremely rare exception where the evidence overwhelmingly has implicated LeT directly in the attack. This, in part, resulted from the Indian government’s unusual decision to release sensitive and normally classified evidence including the communications intercepts between the attackers and their controllers. Given the spectacular nature of that attack, the Indian government may have felt compelled to release information it normally would not have made public likely giving for political reasons. This factor may give some credence to previous Indian government claims. This paper will try to address some of the issues surrounding attack data by looking at whether LeT has accepted responsibility for the attack, whether any

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captured LeT operatives have admitted to LeT’s role, whether the attack fits into LeT’s typical
tactics and modus operandi, and whether other sources allegations have accepted LeT’s alleged
involvement.
III. 2008 Mumbai Terror Attack: Implications and Key Questions

In November 2008, the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba carried out the brutal and audacious attack in Mumbai. In order to carry out the attacks, ten LeT militants landed by sea and split into five pairs to carry out attacks against five carefully selected targets. They also struck another five incidental targets during the extended siege. The attack lasted nearly 60 hours and ultimately resulted in death of 166 people including civilians and security personnel as well as another 304 people injured. Among the civilians killed included 26 foreigners, six of whom were Americans. The evidence overwhelmingly points to the Pakistan based group as the perpetrator of the attack. Although the Pakistani government initially attempted to deny that the attack was carried out from its soil; Pakistani investigators eventually conceded in a report sent to Indian authorities that “[t]he investigation has established beyond any reasonable doubt that the defunct LeT activists conspired, abetted, planned, financed, and established [the] communication network to carry out terror attacks in Mumbai.”

The November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, in many ways, marked both a culmination of old trends as well as setting new precedents. The modus operandi of the attack was not new; Lashkar-e-Tayyiba had employed the fidayeen style of attack hundreds of times over the previous decade. Even the number of deaths did not surpass the July 2006 Mumbai training bombings which resulted in 209 deaths. Terrorists had also previously struck Mumbai by sea. Yet, the ambitious scope of the attack, its prolonged nature and the fact that it garnered international media attention marked a wide

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departure for Lashkar-e-Tayyiba.\(^6\) A RAND report on the attack succinctly stated the significance of the Mumbai attack:

The Mumbai attack demonstrates that jihadist organizations based in Pakistan are able to plan and launch ambitious terrorist operations, at least in neighboring countries such as India. Put in the context of previous terrorist attacks in India by Pakistani-based or local jihadist groups, it suggests a continuing, perhaps escalating, terrorist campaign in South Asia. Beyond India, the Mumbai attack reveals a strategic terrorist culture that thoughtfully identified strategic goals and ways to achieve them and that analyzed counterterrorist measures and developed ways to obviate them to produce a 9/11-quality attack. For 60 hours, the terrorists brought a city of 20 million people to a standstill while the world looked on.\(^7\)

The 2008 Mumbai terror attack carries a number of important implications and poses several key questions. First, the attack marks the first time where LeT has internationalized its targets by specifically attacking the Israel-affiliated Nariman House as well as targeting foreigners at other locations during the attack. The Leopold Café and the Taj Mahal Palace and Trident-Oberoi Hotels were also popular destinations with foreigners and well known internationally.\(^8\) This has raised the question of what finally pushed LeT to internationalize its targeting after more than two decades of a vitriolic anti-western and anti-Israeli ideology, and whether it has in fact escalated its objectives into an anti-western and, more specifically, anti-Israeli agenda, or whether these attacks were designed more to embarrass India and tarnish its growing relationship with Israel.

Second, given the historically close relationship between the ISI and LeT, the fact that LeT targeted Jews and westerners risking an American backlash has raised questions of the extent to which LeT may have grown independent from its state sponsors.\(^9\) Shortly after the attack, an ex-U.S. Department of Defense Official stated that American intelligence agencies had determined that


\(^{7}\) Ibid., 7-8.


former officers from Pakistan’s Army and the ISI had assisted in training the Mumbai attackers though he also noted that no specific links had been uncovered between the terrorists and the Pakistani government.\textsuperscript{10} Several possible outcomes exist. LeT may continue to remain as a tool of the Pakistani state. If this is the case, then the Pakistani ISI and Army were likely complicit in the attack. Alternatively, it may have aligned itself quietly behind the interests of Pakistan’s national security establishment and could be used covertly. Finally, the group may have simply broken away from the ISI and could be acting independently. This last possibility also raises the question of whether the Pakistani state has the capability to dismantle LeT, particularly at a time when it is besieged by other domestic militants currently targeting the Pakistani state.\textsuperscript{11}

Third, the targeting of the attacks also suggests that LeT may have aimed to stoke Hindu-Muslim discord. The attack Chattrapati Shivaji Train Station struck at middle and lower middle class Indians. Notably, the Train Station is named after a 17\textsuperscript{th} century Hindu leader who reestablished Hindu political dominance in the region after an extended period of Muslim rule suggesting the target may have been chosen for its symbolic value—not without precedent in previous LeT attacks.\textsuperscript{12} Furthermore, attacks on the Taj Mahal Palace and Trident-Oberoi Hotels targeted wealthy and upper class Indians.\textsuperscript{13} These choices in targets may be indicative of an overall strategic shift for LeT from focusing on the liberation of Kashmir to destabilizing the entirety of India. Exacerbating tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities and provoking Hindu reprisals can divide India and facilitate recruitment of radicalized Islamist extremists.\textsuperscript{14} Furthermore, Hindu-Muslim violence reinforces LeT’s ideology which not only allows it to garner new recruits but also raise more funds to support future operations.

\textsuperscript{11} Loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{12} C. Christine Fair, \textit{Antecedents and Implications of the November 2008 Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) Attack}, pg. 12
\textsuperscript{13} Mumbai Dossier of Evidence. Rabasa, 1.
\textsuperscript{14} Rabasa,1.
Finally, the attack also raises questions about LeT’s recruitment and support networks since it received both local Indian support as well as assistance from westerners of Pakistani descent to prepare for the attacks. In December 2009 American authorities arrested David C. Headley and Tahawwur Hussain Rana and charged them with, among other things, aiding the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. The American-born Headley, who legally changed his name from Daoud Gilani to make travel easier, moved effortlessly between the U.S., Pakistan, and India for nearly seven years and received training from LeT.\textsuperscript{15} As an American of Pakistani descent, he may have played an integral role selecting the relatively obscure Nariman house for targeting as he may have been more knowledgeable of the nexus between the west and India than the Pakistani based LeT leadership.

Furthermore, the involvement of local Indians in both the attack planning as well as the operation itself suggest that LeT may have an expanding network of support cells in India. Indian authorities charged two detained Indian nationals—Fahim Arshad Ansari and Sabahuddin Ahmad—with preparing the maps and videotapes that aided the Lashkar militants to their targets during the Mumbai attack in February 2009. This marked the first official acknowledgement by the Indian government that Indians had participated in the attacks.\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore, the intercepted communications between the Mumbai attackers and their controllers in Pakistan revealed that one of the controllers spoke Hindi. The Hindi-speaking Lashkar control was later identified by Indian intelligence agencies as Syed Zabiuddin Syed Zakiuddin Ansari from Maharashtra state in India.\textsuperscript{17} His role in the control room during the attack raises the question of whether LeT has begun to concede to greater Indian involvement in its operations. The remainder of this paper will seek to

resolve some of the issues raised by Mumbai attack and discern the factors that have fueled LeT’s evolution leading into the attack.
IV. The Evolution of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba

Ideology

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) adheres to the Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought, a reformist Islamic movement with origins in nineteenth-century north India and closely related to the Wahabbism of Saudi Arabia. Ahl-e-Hadith is distinct from the Deobandi School of Islam influencing most of Pakistan’s other major militant Islamic organizations. Historically Deobandism has had a substantial minority following in Pakistan whereas Ahl-e-Hadith has had a very small presence in the country. This has given LeT only a very limited natural base to recruit from whereas the various Deobandi organizations have a much larger group they can draw from. For this reason proselytizing is a vital component of LeT’s mission. Furthermore, this relatively small base of Ahl-e-Hadith within Pakistani society has also likely contributed to LeT’s close relationship with the Pakistan’s Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) at least partially aimed at creating a favorable domestic atmosphere to allow the group grow its numbers and spread its influence in a country where it has few natural allies.

The nineteenth-century founders of Ahl-e-Hadith believed they had a divine responsibility to purge popular Muslim practice of what they viewed as un-Islamic borrowings from Hindu traditions which they regarded as *bida’at* (innovations) to Islam akin to *shirk* (the sin of associating anything with God). Much like Wahhabism, the early founders of Ahl-e-Hadith believed that Muslims needed to return the original sources of their faith comprising the Qur’an and the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet), and abandon all beliefs and practices not sanctioned from these. They advocated strict adherence to *shari’ah* (Islamic Law) and abandoning *taqlid* (imitation or tradition) of the *mazahib*

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(s. mazhab) or traditional schools of Islamic jurisprudence. The Ahl-e-Hadith rejected the taqlid on the grounds that the mazahib had formed more than two hundred years after the death of the Prophet and therefore the Companions did not follow it. They argued that following any of the mazahib amounted to personality worship of the founders of those mazahib and constituted a grave sin. Indeed, these beliefs brought the Ahl-e-Hadith into bitter conflicts with the 'ulema of the Hanafi mazhab, the dominant school of jurisprudence in South Asia.\(^{20}\) It should be noted that both the Barelvis and the Deobandis—the two dominant forms of Islam in Pakistan—adhere to the Hanafi mazhab.

The Ahl-e-Hadith also vehemently opposed the Sufi tradition which historically enjoyed immense popularity in South Asia. Historically Sufism served as the primary vehicle for the spread of Islam on the Indian subcontinent. The Ahl-e-Hadith founders viewed Sufism as a wrongful innovation and condemned the belief in Sufi saints as intermediaries with God as a form of polytheism. They also condemned the Sufi beliefs in the supernatural powers of the Prophet. Indeed, by vehemently opposing popular Sufi traditions and the highly influential Hanafi 'ulama among South Asian Islam, the Ahl-e-Hadith frequently found themselves banned from worship at mosques and condemned as apostates and enemies of Islam. For the Ahl-e-Hadith, the constant conflict with the dominant Muslim groups drew clear lines of division between themselves as the only true Muslims and the rest and played a crucial role in the development of a separate Ahl-e-Hadith identity.\(^{21}\) Nevertheless its vehement opposition to popular Muslim practice in Pakistan also kept the group in relative obscurity until the 1980s.

The early Ahl-e-Hadith had some elements of militancy, and saw themselves as carrying on the long tradition of jihad. This included claiming the legacy of the early nineteenth century jihad movement led by Sayyed Ahmad Barelvi and Isma’il Shahid against the Sikhs in the Punjab as well as

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\(^{21}\) Loc. cit.
playing some role in leading uprisings during the failed 1857 revolt against the British. Nevertheless
by the end of the nineteenth century most militant Ahl-e-Hadith gave up the path of violence in the
face of British arms.22

While the Ahl-e-Hadith continues to have a limited following in Pakistan, it presence in
Pakistani society has grown substantially since the 1980s. The growing number of madaris (s.
madrasah, Islamic schools) in the country over the past few decades fueled by the Soviet invasion of
Afghanistan as well as General Zia-ul Haq's Islamization of Pakistani society in the 1980s created a
growing appeal for scripturalist interpretations of Islam. Furthermore, many of these madaris were
funded by Saudis who espoused conservative Wahhabi forms of Islam that closely resembles the
Ahl-e-Hadith. The vehement opposition to the Ahl-e-Hadith from traditional Muslim groups in
Pakistan has precipitously declined since the late 1970s and the ideology has become more palatable
across Pakistani society.23

LeT seeks to create a universal Islamic state through the combination of da’wat
(proselytizing, literal meaning is invitation) and armed jihad and views these two concepts as
inseparable. Da’wat aims to return Muslims to the original sources of their faith, the Quran and the
Hadith, and purify Pakistani society in particular and Muslim societies in general to purge Islam of
external, particularly “Hindu”, influences on the path to establishing an Islamic state which can impose shari’ah (Islamic law). With the establishment of an Islamic state where all Muslims lived
strictly according to God’s laws then Islam could begin to exert control of the whole world and
exercise its supremacy. In order to establish this Islamic state, national boundaries need to be
overcome and the Muslim ummah (community) must be united.24

23 Ibid., 218-219.
Mariam Abou Zahab. “I shall be waiting for you at the door of paradise’: the Pakistani martyrs of the Lashkar-e Taiba
(Army of the Pure).” in The Practice of War: Production, Reproduction, and Communication of Armed Conflict. Edited by Aparna
Armed jihad plays a unique and central role in LeT’s ideology which views it as fard-e-ain (an individual obligation). For this reason, LeT diverges from other Ahl-e-Hadith movements in Pakistan which are generally peaceful and do not view militant jihad as obligatory. Indeed, the group is organized along military lines and all of its recruits receive some sort of military training even though the majority does not actually engage in terrorist attacks. It commands Muslims to undertake armed struggle to defend their co-religionists suffering from oppression around the world. For LeT, militant jihad must continue until Islam dominates the world.\(^25\) Armed jihad is portrayed by LeT as the source of Muslim power and when “Muslims abandoned jihad and other injunctions they began to degenerate.”\(^26\)

In terms of politics, LeT has never become actively involved in Pakistan’s politics and has never established or aligned itself with a political party. According to Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, the founder and current leader of LeT, politics is a vital opponent of Islam but views the Western conception of democracy and elections as un-Islamic. For Saeed, politics entails control over people and “harnessing their capabilities and evolving an efficient administrative machinery.” For Saeed, Da’wa and jihad accomplish these tasks allowing Muslims to reach their full potentials.\(^27\) Saeed has stated that:

Muslims should not change according to changing circumstances, instead they should revert the circumstances towards Islam. Those who have abandoned Islamic politics and adopted democratic politics and attempted to merge Islamic politics with the former, they changed themselves. They could not bring any change in society, they lost in the process. We are strict and rigid in our approach therefore we stand committed to our fundamentals.\(^28\)

In a pamphlet entitled “Why Are We Waging Jihad,” LeT declares India, Israel, and the United States as existential enemies of Islam and lists eight reasons for violent jihad. These reasons include: 1.) to eliminate evil and facilitate the conversion to and practice of Islam; 2) to ensure the

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 222.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 143.
\(^{28}\) Ibid., 143-144.
ascendancy of Islam; 3) to force non-Muslims to pay *jizya*’ (a tax paid by non-Muslims for protection from a Muslim ruler); 4) to assist the weak and powerless; 5) to avenge the blood of Muslims killed by non-believers; 6) to punish enemies for breaking promises and treaty obligations; 7) to defend a Muslim state; and 8) to liberate Muslim territories under non-Muslim occupation. ²⁹

For the Lashkar, its initial forays into Kashmir were only the first step in a wider global armed jihad against non-believers. Indeed, after ostensibly liberating Kashmir and reuniting it with Pakistan, it would then seek to disintegrate the rest of India and have it taken over by Pakistan for the establishment of an Islamic state across the entire Indian subcontinent.³⁰ This process would continue globally in order to regain all lost Muslim territories including Palestine as well as several other diverse locations such as Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary, Cyprus, and even parts of France on the path to establishing a Universal Islamic State.³¹

**Organizational Structure**

LeT has undergone substantial organizational changes over time, particularly in response to international and Indian pressures. Yet, in spite of these pressures it has never splintered and its core founding leadership has largely remained intact—a remarkable feat given it’s nearly quarter century of existence. Its organizational integrity likely owes to the close relationship it has cultivated with the ISI. The fact that its core leadership has remained intact also suggests that the Pakistan’s ISI and Army have maintained a great deal of confidence and trust in them. Over the course of the past decade the group has become increasingly independent while continuing to maintain its safe haven within Pakistan. Indeed, the Pakistani Government has consistently resisted applying pressure to the group suggesting that it has sought to retain its operational capabilities. LeT’s

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³¹ Hussain Haqqani. “The Ideologies of South Asian Jihadi Groups.”
growing independence over time may have resulted from an active policy of reducing LeT’s dependence on the ISI to create a greater degree of plausible deniability necessitated by the changed international political environment following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. By making the group more independent from state support, the ISI could further obfuscate its connections with LeT while simultaneously sustaining it as a covert proxy. Claims that the Pakistani Government does not have the capacity to dismantle the group may serve as a deliberate deception designed to allow the ISI to sustain LeT as a strategic asset.

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba’s formally came into existence in 1986 when three Pakistani university professors from the department of Islamic studies at Lahore engineering University—Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Dr. Zafar Iqbal, and Hafiz Adul Rehman Makki (Saeed’s brother-in-law)—along with Sheikh Abdullah Azam—a Palestinian and former teacher and mentor of Osama bin Laden who was assassinated in 1989—established the Markaz Daawat wal Irshad (Center for Preaching and Guidance). The Center aimed to both promote and spread the Ahl-e-Hadith creed as well as train and support mujahideen to battle the Soviets in Afghanistan. Its headquarters were set-up in a sprawling 200 acre compound in the town of Muridke located some 30 km from Pakistan’s cultural center of Lahore. Various sources attribute funding for the complex to the ISI, Zia ul-Haq’s government, and Abdullah Azam himself—money to support the organization likely came from all of these sources and more. The compound itself consists of several schools, a farm, factories, and other facilities and was meant to exemplify a pure city (Medinat al-Tayyiba) in an Islamic environment where television and pictures are banned but cassettes of warrior songs are available.32

The Markaz also established two training centers for the mujahideen: one located in Paktia province, Afghanistan known as Mu’askar-e-Tayyiba and a second one in Mu’askar-e-Aqsa in Kunar province. It should be noted that these two provinces have a sizeable number of Ahl-e-Hadith

32 Abou Zahab.
followers even though much of the rest of the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan adhere to the Deobandi school of Islam. Since the Markaz joined the Afghan jihad as it was winding down, it played a largely an inconsequential role in that conflict. Nonetheless its involvement in this conflict paved the way for the group’s leader, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, to forge close ties with Pakistan’s ISI. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Markaz shifted its jihad to Kashmir in 1990 in order to avoid entanglement in the factional fighting in Afghanistan. By 1993 the Markaz’s jihad branch had coalesced into Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) at the direction of the ISI and became a full-fledged covert proxy against India.  

As LeT became increasingly embroiled in the Kashmir conflict, the Markaz grew rapidly in terms of both resources and recruits. By 2001, LeT boasted of having roughly two thousand recruitment centers located throughout Pakistan, though often a recruiting office could be nothing more than a table set up in a local village manned by two LeT members. Many of these recruitment offices were also located in public universities where LeT has recruited more actively than the Deobandi terror groups that typically rely on the madaris. Since its inception in the Afghan Jihad, LeT has received substantial funding from Saudi Arabian sources resulting from the ideological affinities between the Ahl-e-Hadith and Wahhabism as well as its part Saudi origins through Abdullah Azzam. Some of its funds during the 1990s also purportedly came from Osama Bin Ladin who also allegedly participated in some of LeT’s general meetings. LeT also receives a substantial amount of funding from the Pakistani diaspora in Europe—mostly from Britain, France, and the Netherlands—as well as in the Persian Gulf. It also collects donations in Pakistan. Through 2001 LeT openly collected donations for waging jihad in Kashmir, however since 2002

33 Abou Zahab.
34 Abou Zahab, 136.
36 Abou Zahab, 135.
these donations are usually accepted under the cover of charitable and humanitarian activities as well
as aid for religious schools.\textsuperscript{37} The ISI also provided LeT with operational funding, equipment, and
training though it is difficult to ascertain how much this support continues into the present day.\textsuperscript{38}

Since 1994, LeT has also established a network of \textit{Ad Daawat} schools under the direction of
one of its original founders Dr. Zafar Iqbal. Unlike many other militant Islamic groups, LeT
advocates modern education and believes it does not conflict with religious education. Instead it
believes that modern technology should be used in the pursuit of Islamic education as well as to
provide for military training. In particular, LeT advocates the teaching of modern management,
computer sciences and communication. Hafiz Saeed himself stated that when Muslims “gave up
Jihad, science and technology also went into the hands of others. This is natural, The one who
possesses power also commands science, the economy and politics.”\textsuperscript{39} LeT’s emphasis on modern
education and the technical fields such as information technology has also made it a highly
sophisticated and technologically adept terrorist group particularly in the realm of communications.

The network of schools run by LeT also capitalize on the weaknesses of Pakistan’s state
education and offer modern education that adapts better to the labor market than the purely
religious curriculum of the \textit{madaris}. The schools emphasize Arabic, English, and computer science
in particular. They also promote the Ahl-e-Hadith version of Islam and seek to relate faith to
modern knowledge. From an early age students are indoctrinated into the imperative of jihad. For
example, Urdu textbooks for second year students contain the wills of martyrs and encourage
children—both boys and girls—to prepare to sacrifice themselves for jihad. In 2002, the Markaz
claimed to have over two hundred primary schools with 20,000 students enrolled including 5,000

\textsuperscript{37} About Zahab, 135.
\textsuperscript{38} Ashley J. Tellis, “Bad Company—Lashkar E-Tayyiba And the Growing Ambition of Islamist Militancy in Pakistan,”
Congressional Testimony before the United States House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Subcommittee on the middle East and South Asia, 11 March 2010, pg. 4.
\textsuperscript{39} Saeed Shafqat. “From Official Islam to Islamism: The Rise of Dawat-ul-Irshad and Lashkar-e-Taiba.” 130-147 in
LeT also runs a university at its headquarters in Muridke. These schools provide an avenue for LeT to indoctrinate children and groom a future generation of recruits from an early age imparting them with both the necessary motivation and skills to become highly effective fighters. Given the overall weakness of public education in Pakistan, the Government would likely be hard pressed to shut these schools down as they often provide an avenue for an adequate education for the lower middle and poorer classes that generally cannot afford private schools and are not well served by the public schools. Beyond education, LeT has also provided other social services including a running a medical mission consisting of mobile clinics, an ambulance service and blood banks.

LeT has also engaged in an active propaganda and public relations campaign. It published its views and propounded its ideology through a variety of publications. The monthly Urdu language journal *Al-Daawat* allegedly had a circulation of 80,000 and was reportedly the most widely read religious magazine in Punjab—Pakistan’s most populous and politically important province. In particular, this journal published the testaments and life stories of martyrs (*wasiatnamah*) that were written before young men were sent off on operations in India. These testaments were also designed to carry immense propaganda value by inspiring others to join the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. LeT also published Arabic and English monthlies—likely geared towards their Saudi Wahhabi patrons and the Pakistani diaspora in the West respectively—as well as an Urdu Weekly geared towards young students. LeT also operated a website through its cover organization Jaamat-ud-

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40 Roy, 33-34. Abou Zahab, 136.
41 Roy, 35-36.
42 Abou Zahab, 139-140.
Dawa though the site is no longer online. Its publications were prohibited and its website ordered shut down following the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.\textsuperscript{44}

LeT also used to host an annual conference until at least 2002. These conferences reportedly attracted hundreds of thousands of attendees and LeT leaders, its fighters, and martyrs’ families would deliver impassioned speeches on the importance of jihad with the aim of attracting additional recruits.\textsuperscript{45} Despite the large size of these conferences, they were not necessarily indicative of the level of support LeT attracted but rather suggestive of its remarkable organizational capabilities as it would provide free transportation (by renting hundreds of buses), and offer free food and medical care to attract attendees.\textsuperscript{46} While LeT no longer hosts these annual conferences, it continues to occasionally hold staged public rallies where it often brings together thousands of its supporters.

In order to wage its Jihad in Kashmir, the Markaz began operating five major training centers for its terrorist operatives. Four of these training camps—Muaskar-e-Tayyiba, Muaskar-e-Aqsa, \textit{Um al Qura} and \textit{Abdullah bin Masood}—were located in Pakistan controlled Kashmir while a fifth—\textit{Muhammad bin Qasim}—was located in the Sanghar district of Sindh. It also has operated dozens of other smaller training facilities throughout Pakistan.\textsuperscript{47} These training camps are usually fairly simple structures usually consisting of only an armory and a kitchen as trainees are expected to sleep and train out in the open regardless of the extremes of the weather.\textsuperscript{48} Over the past decade, as international pressure on Pakistan to crack down on the group has ebbed and flowed, many of these camps were temporarily shut down or their locations shifted and activities scaled back. Today these

\textsuperscript{45} Roy, 37.
\textsuperscript{47} Abou Zahab, 137.

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training camps have a lower public profile in the country, though LeT’s training activities are allowed to continue.\(^49\)

LeT has a well-documented and rigorous training regimen for its militants which combine both religious indoctrination into the Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought with military and guerrilla warfare training. The process begins when local LeT officials select candidates based on their level of motivation to attend the basic course known as the *daura-e-amma*.\(^50\) Prior to attending this course, recruits are asked to go on a 15 days on a preaching tour to spread the Ahl-e-Hadith message. The *daura-e-amma* course itself focuses on religious education and indoctrination into the Ahl-e-Hadith school and lasts 21 days. Following this course, trainees are sent back home to resume their former activities and engage in *daawat* work in their neighborhood in order to attempt recruit their friends and family. During this time they remain under scrutiny of local LeT leaders who may chose to accept them for the follow on *daura-e-khassa*, or special course, after a period of observation for several months. This course entails further indoctrination into the *Ahl-e-Hadith* and seeks to prepare the recruits for *tabligh*, or preaching. It also provides advanced military training including guerrilla tactics and survival techniques in a hostile environment.\(^51\) Training encompasses river crossing, mountain climbing, and how to ambush military convoys. It also covers the use of sidearms, sniper rifles, grenades, rocket launchers and wireless radio sets as well as constructing explosives. In the final weeks of training, recruits use live ammunition, construct explosives, and continue to perfect ambush techniques. The final test of the second stage of training lasts three days and involves sending a large group of trainees on hikes and climbs through high-altituted and wodded terrain without food or sleep except for the occasional nap. At the end of this final test, the trainees are provided with a goat, a knife and a matchbox from which they must cook their own food.

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\(^{50}\) Roy, 39.

\(^{51}\) Abou Zahab, 142.
Following the special course, additional follow-on and operation specific training may be provided for those who complete the course successfully and are selected to participate in operations. Muhammad Amir Ajmal, the lone-surviving Mumbai terrorist, went through this training process. Following the military training he received at the daura-e-khassa, he also received additional specialized training in marine commando tactics and sea navigation to prepare him for the Mumbai mission.52

LeT trains far more militants than it actually sends to carry out operations in India. Most militants are employed in Pakistan and serve as a source of manpower for the organizations domestic efforts or are trained with the expectation they will return to their villages and proselytize spreading LeT’s influence and potentially attracting recruits. Beyond proselytizing trained militants may also engage in fund-raising activities or staffing local LeT offices and camps.53 This extra manpower likely also serves as a reserve force where, should tensions between India and Pakistan increase, LeT would have the personnel to sustain its operational capabilities while ratcheting up the number of terror attacks in India—possibly at the direction of the ISI.

Until 2001, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba operated relatively unimpeded and worked to grow and expand its organization. ISI only constrained its activities to the extent that they would not precipitate in a full-scale war with India. Nevertheless following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the international political environment shifted dramatically and made it increasingly difficult for Pakistan’s national security establishment to openly patronize terrorist organizations. Events came to a head following the December 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian parliament in New Delhi which nearly precipitated in a full-scale war between India and Pakistan. The Indian government accused LeT of involvement in the attack and shortly thereafter the U.S.

53 Abou Zahab, 143.
Department of State designated LeT as a terrorist organization and the U.S. administration blocked its financial assets. With the impetus of the 9/11 terror attacks, LeT began to face international scrutiny for the first time.

As a result of the international pressure following the December 2001 Indian Parliament attack, former President Musharraf officially banned LeT in January 2002. the Markaz ul-Da’wa wal-Irshad rebranded itself as the Jama’at-ud-Da’wa (JuD) and publicly disassociated itself from its armed wing, the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. For the purposes of this paper LeT and JuD will be used synonymously. These changes, however, were largely cosmetic and likely designed to further conceal but maintain LeT’s operational capabilities. JuD ostensibly became a missionary (tablīgī) organization focused on education and social welfare activities. LeT was supposedly shifted into the hands of Kashmiris and its activities and infrastructure were moved and confined to Kashmir. Its base was moved to Muzzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan administered Kashmir, whereas JuD would remain based out of Muridke. Hafiz Muhammad Saeed stepped down from his role as chief of LeT and became the chief of JuD whereas Zaki-Ur-Rehman Lakhvi—another founder of LeT—was appointed supreme commander of LeT.54

Despite the public separation between the two, JuD essentially operated as a recruiting, fundraising, and ideological cover organization for LeT. While some of LeT’s offices and recruitment centers were closed, many others were simply rebranded as JuD offices though they, in effect, did not stop recruiting for LeT. LeT’s publications continued under JuD largely unchanged while JuD also established a website to purvey its ideology. The Al-Da’wa model schools continued to operate unimpeded. JuD also continued to host LeT’s annual conference through 2003 although its location was shifted from the headquarters in Murdike to Pattoki, another town in Punjab near Lahore, in 2002. JuD also continued fundraising activities for LeT though these donations were

54 Abou Zahab, 149-150.
usually accepted under the cover of charitable and humanitarian activities as well as aid for religious schools rather than openly for jihad in Kashmir. LeT’s public visibility has declined somewhat since 2002. For example, armed militants at its base in Muridke are no longer seen publicly. While LeT’s activities largely continued unabated under the cover of JuD, it would be hard for the Pakistani government to justify a completely open presence under the scrutiny of the international community.

LeT noticeably expanded its social service activities following its rebranding as JuD in 2002. JuD’s charitable wing, the Idaarat Khidmat-e-Khalq (IKK), or Administration for the Service of the People, set up two hospitals in Muridke and Muzzaffarabad. It also setup medical dispensaries and mobile medical camps for impoverished patients in various Afghan and Kashmiri refugee camps. The Al-Da’wa Medical Mission expanded its activities in the poorer areas of Sind and Baluchistan provinces. The IKK also provided tsunami relief in the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia following the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. According to documents published by the IKK, it spent around $290 thousand in these relief efforts. Although this was a relatively modest sum if true, the relief efforts may have allowed LeT to expand its networks into these countries. An uncovered LeT cell in the Maldives was linked to the first ever terror attack in that country in 2007. JuD also spearheaded a highly organized and well-funded humanitarian relief effort following the 2005 Kashmir earthquake. JuD linked charities in the United Kingdom allegedly raised $10 million for earthquake relief efforts though less than half was actually used for relief operations according to British counterterrorism officials. Most of the British based donors to these relief efforts likely did

57 Abou Zahab, 50.
not know that their donations would be diverted to terrorism efforts.\(^{59}\) Following its quake relief efforts LeT, was once again allowed to openly collect funds officially for reconstruction efforts.\(^{60}\)

LeT’s expansion of its social services has served several purposes. Social services provide new opportunities to recruit, expand its constituency and raise new funds. They also generate goodwill among the population which, in turn, increases its popular support and makes it more difficult for the Government to crack down on them. Social services have also provided a means for LeT to continue its activities and maintain its operational capabilities under an ostensibly legal cover. It also has allowed LeT to grow more independent from the Pakistani State for support as it develops its own constituency and new funding sources which further obscures its relationship with the ISI. The altered international political environment following 9/11 may have also necessitated a policy of making LeT more independent in order to obfuscate its ties to the ISI. Claims that the Pakistani government does not have the capabilities to dismantle the group may in fact serve as a deliberate deception to maintain the group as a strategic asset.

Engaging in social services may have also provided a means to moderate and redirect the activities of LeT’s militants in light of the significant rapprochement between India and Pakistan under the Musharraf government which precipitated in the Islamabad Accord of 2004. LeT allegedly agreed to wage a “controlled jihad” under the direction of the ISI following this agreement.\(^{61}\) While LeT used to send out large groups comprising thirty to sixty militants on a fairly regular basis from launching points along the Line of Control (LoC), the “controlled jihad” entailed reducing these groups to between five and fifteen people separated by long intervals.\(^{62}\) To a more optimistic observer, in light of the rapprochement between India and Pakistan social services may

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\(^{61}\) Mir, 66.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 63.
have acted as a means to demobilize LeT by moving it into civil society. In reality, however, LeT’s operational capabilities were never dismantled and it continued a sustained stream of attacks though the intensity and frequency declined. The fact that the ISI could calibrate LeT’s activities suggests that it has continued to operate as a tool of Pakistan’s foreign policy.

Pakistan’s desire to retain the operational capabilities of LeT and the fact that the ISI and Pakistani Army continue to view the organization as a strategic partner is most strongly evidenced by its paltry response following the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. In response to that attack the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) declared JuD an affiliate of al-Qaeda and proscribed the group. This offered legal justification under international law for Pakistan to dismantle the group. Following the international ban on JuD, Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry issued a notification stating that the group would face an asset freeze, travel ban and an arms embargo—all required by UNSC Resolution 1267 which governs sanctions against al-Qaeda, the Taliban and their affiliates. The Pakistani government detained JuD’s Amir Hafiz Saeed and shut down many of its offices across the country. Despite rhetorical claims and public actions, however, the Pakistani Interior Ministry never issued a formal notification banning the organization and thus the group was never legally banned in Pakistan. Such a notification would have been enforceable under Pakistan’s Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997. Indeed, the Lahore High Court ordered the release of Hafiz Saeed in October 2009 and ruled that there were no constraints on JuD to collect funds and that it could carry on its activities since it was not included on a list of banned terrorist organizations. A mid-level officer in the ISI even told the New York Times several months after the attack, speaking on the condition of anonymity, that the Lashkar militants “were good people” who could be controlled.

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A mere five months after the Mumbai terror attacks, JuD rebranded itself once again as Falah-e-Insaniat (Human Welfare) Foundation (FIF). This change likely came about to escape the legal limbo JuD faced in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks allowing it to continue on with its activities. In particular, FIF has engaged in relief efforts for refugees fleeing the Swat Valley during the Pakistan Army’s offensive there in 2009. The group flies the same flag and uses the same symbols as the JuD and volunteers readily acknowledge that FIF used to be known as JuD. The relief efforts include a network of ambulances, emergency medical camps near the fighting and provisions of food and medicine aid. According to a *Times* report, one of the volunteers for the group presented a photocopied registration certificate for FIF stating that it was registered as a charity in Lahore in April 2007, a full year and a half before JuD was ostensibly banned. The same report also stated that a telephone call to the head office of FIF redirected to Yahya Mujahid who described himself as the spokesmen for JuD and confirmed the groups close links with the FIF.66

FIF has also launched a website located at [http://tfi-trust.com/](http://tfi-trust.com/). At the time of this writing, the website does not propagate or expound any specific viewpoints like the former JuD website. Instead, it lists the humanitarian activities it claims to have carried out since 2005 and contact information on the website conveniently provides bank account information to accept donations. The website claims that FIF is a “non-political, non-religious and non-commercial organization” based in Karachi in Pakistan’s Sindh province. On the website the group fashions itself as a human welfare organization. The site currently does not include any information suggesting ties to JuD nor does it use any of its logos.67 Even more ominous both JuD and FIF has also begun to develop a presence the world’s largest online social network, Facebook. At the time of this writing, the FIF online group has a membership of 462 and displays the traditional black and white flag of JuD as a

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part of its logo. In its public listing, the group lists its location as Lahore and its office as “Mureedkay” which is JuD’s traditional headquarters. The public listing describes the group as an “organization to help innocent people all over the world in any emergency.”\(^\text{68}\) JuD also has a Facebook page which includes anti-India propaganda. Images on that page contain slogans exhorting followers to “Free Kashmir, Pakistan’s lifeline, from the enemy” and to work for the “freedom of the Muslims of Gujarat, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and the rest of India.” It even carries several images of Osama bin Laden. LeT’s presence on Facebook appears designed to reach out to the young Pakistani diaspora in the West.\(^\text{69}\)

**Leadership**

LeT’s core leadership has generally remained intact since its formation in the late 1980s suggesting that Pakistan’s ISI and Army has maintained a great deal of trust in this group of individuals. Hafiz Muhammad Saeed is the principal founder and current *amir* (chief) of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and has remained the chief leader of the group since its inception. The highly charismatic leader also laid the intellectual foundation for LeT’s ideology and continues to act as the group’s chief ideologue and spiritual leader. He also oversees its recruitment and fund-raising activities. His efforts laid the groundwork for establishing Lashkar-e-Tayyiba including cultivating the proper connections, raising the necessary funds, and maintaining a close relationship with the ISI. While LeT has never involved itself in Pakistani politics, Saeed can also be seen as LeT’s political figurehead in that he maintains a politically favorable domestic operating environment for the group through his close personal relationship with the ISI.

\(^{68}\) Falah e Insaniyat Foundation (F.I.F) on Facebook; Available from http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=325373247252.
Hafiz Saeed’s personal history likely has left a substantial imprint on LeT. According to Saeed, his family migrated from Shimla in northern India during the partition in which 36 members of his extended family were killed en route. As with many families that lived during the partition era and the generations that followed them when memories of the event remained fresh, stories of his family travails in crossing over into Pakistan during the bloody partition of India have undoubtedly influenced his enmity towards India and contributed to his belief that Hindus cannot govern Muslims justly. Saeed himself was born in 1950 in Sargodha, Punjab into a pious conservative family. Saeed’s mother, Aisha Bibi, was the daughter of a prominent Ahl-e-Hadith scholar. She taught him and his siblings the Quran at an early age and Saeed’s relationship with his mother might partly have influenced LeT’s fairly active efforts to cultivate support among women. ⁷⁰

Hafiz Saeed pursued both a religious and modern education and graduated from Punjab University in 1971 with degrees in Arabic and Islamic studies. He would go on to pursue advanced degrees in Arabic and Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia starting in 1978 and after teach for two years at Saudi University in Ryadh. While in Saudi Arabia, Saeed developed a close relationship with Sheikh Abdul Aziz Baz who was the first Saudi religious cleric to issue a decree for the Afghan jihad in 1979 and urging all Muslims to participate in it. Saeed’s religious education in Saudi Arabia likely solidified his Wahhabi views. After his return to Pakistan, he served as a research officer in the Islamic Ideology Council. He also was appointed as a lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Engineering University in Lahore. Saeed’s extensive background in religious education has likely acted as a major influence on the al-Daawat Model Schools and LeT’s emphasis on modern education. Saeed would eventually become engaged in the Afghan jihad through the tutelage of Abdullah Azzam—the highly

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⁷⁰ Rana/Jihad and Jihadi 16-24
influential Palestinian Islamic scholar and theologian who also served as a teacher and mentor for Osama bin Laden.\textsuperscript{71}

Hafiz Saeed is generally viewed as the most important militant leader in Pakistan as well as the one most agreeable to ISI control. He has reportedly been acquiescent to waging a “controlled jihad” in Kashmir directed by the ISI.\textsuperscript{72} In 2003, the ISI reportedly provided him with a substantial “severance” payment in return for his agreement to remain inactive for an unspecified length of time.\textsuperscript{73} Saeed has been placed under house arrest numerous times in response to Indian and international pressure including following the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament and the 2006 Mumbai train bombings. These detentions have generally been short and Saeed has always been allowed to continue addressing large rallies and resume recruiting and fundraising activities following his release. Furthermore, house arrests in Pakistan often amount to nothing more than providing ISI protection against potential assassination attempts. In December 2008, Hafiz Saeed was once again placed under house arrest in response to the Mumbai terror attacks though he was again released in October 2009.\textsuperscript{74} All of these factors suggest that Saeed remains under the strict control of the ISI. His taking over of JuD in 2002 as a front organization for LeT may have been designed to obscure his links to terrorist operations and hence create greater degree of separation between LeT’s activities and the ISI.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which Saeed is actively involved in the planning of terrorist operations, though given his role as the public face for LeT as well as his organizational, fundraising and recruiting activities he likely provides overall strategic direction rather than overseeing specific operations against India. Saeed reportedly decided the number of militants to

\textsuperscript{72} Mir, 66.
\textsuperscript{74} Nadeem.
send on operations in Kashmir depending on the number of causalities LeT had suffered and the requirements and capacity of the infrastructure in Kashmir to absorb the new fighters.\textsuperscript{75} Six months prior to the Mumbai terror attacks, the United States Department of Treasury placed sanctions on Saeed citing his “key role in LET’s operational and fundraising activities worldwide.” The U.S. Treasury Department also stated that Saeed had “personally organized the infiltration of LET militants into Iraq during a trip to Saudi Arabia” in 2005 and that in the same year he had dispatched a LeT operative to Europe to serve as the European fundraising coordinator.\textsuperscript{76}

The Indian government has accused Saeed of masterminding the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks although very little concrete evidence has been presented publicly implicating him directly in the attack. The lone captured attacker, Muhammad Ajmal, allegedly revealed during his interrogation that Saeed selected the attackers and assigned them new aliases—Abu Mujahid in the case of Ajmal—that evoked the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. Saeed has, rather predictably, denied ever having any links with Ajmal.\textsuperscript{77} Saeed’s house arrest following the attacks was relatively short lived and media reports noted the lackadaisical enforcement of his detention. The Lahore High Court finally ordered the release of Hafiz Saeed in October 2009 and ruled that stating there was not enough evidence against him.\textsuperscript{78} While under house arrest, Saeed was allegedly hosted as a guest of honor at an Iftar dinner by Rawalpindi Corps Commander Lt. General Tahir Mahmood a mere 40 days after the Mumbai assault further evidencing Saeed’s close ties to the the Pakistani Army and ISI.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{75} Abou Zahab, 143.
\textsuperscript{78} Nadeem.
While Hafiz Saeed serves as the chief of LeT and oversees its overall organizational activities, Zaik-ur-Rehman Lakhvi serves as LeT’s chief of operations. In this role Lakhvi largely oversees LeT’s military operations. Very little is known about Lakhvi’s early life. He was born in 1960 in Okara Punjab. His father was a cleric closely linked to the conservative Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith organization. Lakhvi went to join the mujahideen at a relatively young age in the 1980s and eventually became a senior LeT functionary after it was established. He reportedly became a key trainer and operational commander during the Afghan jihad when he commanded the group’s two training camps in Afghanistan. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Lakhvi went on to become operations chief for the Kashmir Valley. He reportedly worked closely with the ISI during the Afghan jihad and this relationship has likely continued since then. Like Saeed, the U.S. Treasury Department also sanctioned Lakhvi in May 2008. It stated that Lakhvi has directed LeT military operations in places such as Chechnya, Bosnia, Iraq, and Southeast Asia. The Treasury Department also stated that Lakhvi sent an operative to travel to Iraq in 2003 to assess the situation there and sent operatives and funds to attack U.S. forces beginning in 2004.

In November 2009 a Pakistani anti-terrorism court formally charged Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi with planning and helping execute the Mumbai attack. Pakistani authorities had detained him shortly after the attacks. There are conflicting reports about whether Lakhvi acted as a handler during the Mumbai attack which India claims he did. Reports have also suggested that Lakhvi, who typically is based in Pakistan-administered Kashmir—moved to Karachi in August 2008 so he could direct the operation and help prepare the militants for the attack. Muhammad Ajmal

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82 “Treasury Targets LeT Leadership.”
Amir reportedly told police investigators that Lakhvi had helped “indoctrinate all the attackers.” He also referred to Lakhvi as “chachu” or uncle. Kasab also allegedly stated that Lakhvi had offered his family PKR 150,000 for participating in the attack. Although Lakhvi is currently being held in jail and is on trial for the Mumbai attack, some South Asia experts have noted unconfirmed reports that he has been allowed to continue running LeT’s operations while in detention.

Another LeT leader, Zarrar Shah, who reportedly heads LeT’s communications branch, allegedly confessed to the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack. A Pakistani official claimed that “he is singing” and said that his admission was supported by U.S. intercepts of a phone call between Shah and one of the attackers at the Taj Mahal palace. American and Indian officials have stated that they believe Shah is one of LeT’s primary liaisons with the ISI. A closer examination of his confession, however, suggests that it may in fact be part of a deliberate deception designed to protect LeT leadership. To begin with, LeT has absolutely never confessed to any attack in which civilians were targeted and killed. It also appears difficult to understand why Shah would so deliberately incriminate himself. Either he could have felt so emboldened and confident by the success of the attack that he felt that the state apparatus could not act against him without risking a severe backlash from LeT militants, or instead the Zarrar Shah that was arrested and detained may very well be a low level operative set up to take the fall for the actual LeT leader who used the alias Zarrar Shah as well as the rest of the LeT leadership by claiming to be the mastermind for the attack.

The traditional modus operandi denying any involvement in attacks on civilians makes the former

87 Christine Fair, Fieldwork in India, April 2010.
possibility improbable. Alternatively, the Zarrar Shah that was arrested and detained may very well be a low level operative set up to take the fall for the actual LeT leader who used the alias Zarrar Shah as well as the rest of the LeT leadership by claiming to be the mastermind for the attack. Pakistani authorities identified a resident from Sheikhpura, Abdul Wajid, as Zarrar Shah. Nevertheless they have also refused requests to provide a picture or submit a voice sample which could verify his identity.\textsuperscript{90} Almost no background information is available on either an Abdul Wajid or a Zarrar Shah. Many Indian investigators believe that Zarrar Shah may in fact be Sajad Mir, LeT’s head of transcontinental operations.\textsuperscript{91} If in fact Zarrar Shah’s confession was a fabrication designed to protect LeT’s senior leadership it would demonstrate the extent to which its leaders are aided by both the Pakistani Army and the ISI and may hint at their complicity in the Mumbai attacks.

Although LeT has remained a fairly consistent organization and demonstrated a great deal of continuity among its leadership, it has not been entirely immune from power struggles and factionalism. Saeed has been accused of corruption and nepotism by some of LeT’s other leaders and one report suggests that local Punjabi kinship and caste structures might have played a role in these disagreements. Zafar Iqbal, a co-founder of LeT, briefly opposed Saeed and the group temporarily split along caste lines. Iqbal led a Jat group which opposed Saeed who is from the Gujjar caste accusing him of nepotism and corruption.\textsuperscript{92} In addition Saeed’s decision to marry the 28 year old widow of a martyr when he was at the age of 64 created enmity between him and the younger Lakhvi.\textsuperscript{93} There was also purportedly even a plot to assassinate Saeed from a faction led by Lakhvi that had ostensibly split off from LeT following the formation of JuD.\textsuperscript{94} The ISI, however,

\textsuperscript{91} Loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{92} Mir, 69-70.
\textsuperscript{93} Haq, 20.
\textsuperscript{94} Mir, 69.
reportedly brokered a truce between Lakhvi and Saeed ending the temporary factionalism. There is no evidence to suggest any of these splits have endured and Hafiz Saeed continues to act as LeT’s figurehead and chief leader.

**Relationship with Pakistan’s Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)**

After 1992, the ISI—Pakistan’s external intelligence agency comparable to the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—began actively and covertly sponsoring militant Islamic groups in targeting Indian forces in Kashmir. This resulted from its growing fear of mass support for the indigenous Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) which advocated for an independent Kashmir fundamentally challenging Pakistan’s own desire to annex the entirety of Kashmir. Islamists based in Pakistan were viewed as a more reliable ally than the indigenous JKLF as they fiercely opposed nationalism and insisted that Kashmir join Muslim Pakistan.

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba soon became Pakistan’s preferred proxy for a number of reasons. Its predominantly Punjabi composition matched the ethnicity of most of the Pakistani Army and the ISI. Furthermore, unlike many of the Deobandi militant groups such as Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) and Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), LeT never had any political ambitions within Pakistan which has often brought Deobandi organizations into conflict with the politically dominant Pakistani army. The group has demonstrated absolute loyalty to its state sponsors and never carried out any attacks inside Pakistan nor against the Pakistani Army and the ISI. It also has never participated in any sectarian violence in the country. Its militants are reportedly obliged to promise to never use their military skills inside Pakistan and not to join any ethnic or sectarian groups. At least until 2002 LeT

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96 Sikand, 228.
97 Roy, 36.
98 Mir, 71-72.
enjoyed complete freedom of action in Pakistan and its headquarters in Murdike existed as an autonomous zone beyond the jurisdiction of the state.\textsuperscript{99}

In the beginning, LeT received comprehensive support from the ISI’s Directorate S—the organization responsible for external operations. A specialized section within Directorate S responsible for covert operations against India acted as the liaison for the various terrorist organizations. ISI support included, among other things, operational funding, specialized weaponry, sophisticated communications equipment, combat training, safe haven for the leadership, intelligence on targets and threats, campaign guidance, infiltration assistance, and fire support from the Pakistani Army when infiltrating into India.\textsuperscript{100}

Over time, as LeT’s fundraising activities have become more prolific and the organization grown more sophisticated, it has increasingly grown independent of the ISI for some forms of assistance though it is difficult to ascertain how much support it continues to receive from the ISI. It is possible that the ISI may have reduced some of its support in response to a thawing in India-Pakistan relations in 2004 as well as in response to international pressure since 2002. The ISI may have also taken steps since 2001 to temper LeT’s activities and attacks to prevent political embarrassment for Pakistan. Saeed’s willingness to wage a “controlled jihad” maybe referring to these limitations, though recent mass casualty attacks by the group—namely the 2008 Mumbai attack as well as the 2006 Mumbai train bombings—would suggest that these limitations no longer apply.\textsuperscript{101}

Today, LeT likely relies on the ISI for safe haven and political protection for its leadership, intelligence on selected targets and threats, and infiltration assistance for long distance operations involving transit through third countries. LeT operations can reportedly be undertaken without

\textsuperscript{99} Roy, 42-43.
\textsuperscript{100} Tellis, 4.
\textsuperscript{101} Mir, 66.
direct approval from the ISI as long as the attacks are not attributable to the ISI and fit within its interests and ISI may provide direction, rather than applying direct control, to LeT as a form of plausible deniability though it is difficult to assess the extent of the continued relationship between the ISI and LeT. A LeT operative captured by Indian authorities in August 2006 reportedly disclosed that ISI and Pakistani Army officials met with LeT commanders on a monthly basis to share information and provided regular updates on Indian security forces and discussed plans to counter Indian strategy. The captured operative allegedly revealed that he was Lakhvi’s personal security officer. American intelligence agencies have also documented regular meetings between the ISI and Lashkar operatives in which intelligence has been shared about Indian operations in Kashmir. One American official even stated that this continued cooperation goes “beyond information sharing to include some funding and training…and these are not rogue ISI elements. What’s going on is done in a fairly disciplined way.”

**Changing Targeting Patterns, Expanding Area of Operations, and Evolving Objectives**

**Operations in India**

LeT was originally established in 1986 to train Pakistanis to fight against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. For this purpose LeT established two training camps in the Paktia and Kunar provinces of Afghanistan. Nevertheless having entered relatively late in conflict it played an inconsequential role in the Afghan jihad. LeT claims that 1,600 of its militants participated in the Afghan jihad but only five were martyred, though this claim is unverifiable. After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, LeT shifted its activities to Kashmir in order to avoid becoming

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102 Tellis, 5.  
103 John.  
104 Eric Schmitt, Mark Mazzetti, and Jane Perlez. “Pakistan’s Spies Aided Group Tied to Mumbai Siege.”
entangled in the factional fighting inside Afghanistan. According to LeT, the symbolic start of its operations in Kashmir occurred on January 1990 when it ambushed a jeep carrying Indian Air Force Personnel. The ISI began to actively support Pakistan based militants in Kashmir beginning in 1992 due to its growing fear of mass support of the indigenous JKLF which advocated for an independent Kashmir rather than one joined with Pakistan. LeT “upgraded” its jihad in 1993 when militants attacked an Indian army base in Poonch. By 1994, the indigenous JKLF had been defeated and the insurgency in Kashmir became increasingly dominated by Pakistani rather than Kashmiri militants. LeT began sending a larger number of militants into Kashmir following the defeat of the JKLF.

From 1996 onwards, LeT shifted its Kashmir strategy by focusing their operations on the border districts of Jammu—namely the Rajuri, Doda and Poonch districts—located south of the Kashmir Valley. This shift occurred primarily for two reasons. First, the area was linguistically similar to Punjabi, the predominant language of LeT militants, and thus made infiltration and operations easier. Second, non-Muslims were the majority in this area and attacks often aimed to religiously cleanse these areas of non-Muslims. The attacks that aimed to religiously cleanse the valley were targeted at civilians and have continued sporadically until at least 2006. LeT is suspected of involvement in the massacre of 16 Hindus in Doda in 1996, 35 Sikh villagers at Chittisinghpura in 2000, 24 Hindu Pandits in the Nadimarg in 2003, and 35 Hindu civilians in Doda in 2006. LeT has been suspected of carrying out dozens of similar communal massacres in the Jammu region.

While most of the attacks are difficult to attribute, a captured LeT militant admitted to his role in the Chittisinghpura massacre of Sikhs in 2000 where militants dressed in Indian Army fatigues brutally

105 Abou Zahab, 137.
106 Sikand, 228-229.
107 “Lashkar-e-Toiba.” South Asia Terrorism Portal.
executed civilians. This attack generally followed the same pattern as the other communal attacks suggesting LeT involvement.110

In May 1998 Pakistan became a declared nuclear power and its militants could now operate under the cover of a nuclear umbrella. In 1999, LeT claimed to have participated in the Kargil Operation by sending 200 Afghan fighters to participate in the conflict with India. In reality, however, most evidence suggests that this operation was carried out exclusively by the Pakistani Army thus making LeT’s claimed participation likely a fabrication.111 The combination of Pakistan’s newly acquired nuclear umbrella coupled with Pakistan’s embarrassing defeat during the Kargil War likely fueled an escalation of militant violence not only in Kashmir, but also in the Indian hinterland. By most estimates, violence in the Kashmir Valley reached its peak in the period between 1999 and 2002. Following the Kargil incident, LeT announced that it had entered what it termed as the second stage of jihad and introduced a frightening new tactic, the fidayeen attack.

The fidayeen attack has since become the hallmark *modus operandi* of LeT. This style of attack consists of having well trained and highly motivated fighters engage the enemy on its own territory where they storm a target and kill as many people as possible, whether soldiers or civilians, before taking defensive positions and engaging security force personnel until the fighter is killed. Often such battles can last upwards of twenty hours—the Mumbai attack lasted 60 hours. These spectacular and well-planned attacks achieve maximum publicity, garner new recruits and demoralize the enemy as they often must resort to heavy fire that destroys their own buildings and cause substantial collateral damage in the process. These attacks are often inaccurately described as suicide attacks, though in reality the attacker never kill himself and while death maybe likely, the attackers

110 Bearak.
do have a chance to escape alive however slim it maybe.\textsuperscript{112} LeT never has been implicated in any suicide bombings. The ostensible reason for this is that suicide is prohibited in Islam, though in reality it may simply not have needed to resort to such tactics. Suicide bombings require little skill or training on the part of the attacker and often are a cheap and simple weapon to employ against a superior force. In the case of LeT, however, it can train and operate freely in Pakistan and has no shortage of funds to purchase and acquire relatively sophisticated weaponry. Indeed, during the 2008 Mumbai attacks, LeT operatives appeared far better armed and trained than the Indian police forces they faced.

The first fidayeen attack occurred on July 12, 1999 in which a single LeT militant killed thirteen members of the paramilitary Indian Border Security Force (BSF) being martyred after three days of fighting at a post in Baramulla in northern Kashmir. In November 1999, LeT militants attacked the Indian army headquarters in Badami Bagh in Srinagar killed eight Indian soldiers before the two attackers were killed.\textsuperscript{113} After this attack, Hafiz Saeed told a crowd of 300,000 at LeT’s annual conference in Muridke that his fighters could now “strike anywhere in India,” and threatened to even target the Prime Minister’s office. He also revealed that he planned to extend LeT’s activities beyond Kashmir deep inside India and aimed to liberate not only Kashmir but the entirety of India.\textsuperscript{114}

LeT made good on these claims with its successful attack on the Red Fort in New Delhi in December 2000. This attack marked LeT’s first major attack outside of Jammu and Kashmir. The selection of the Red Fort as a target carried tremendous symbolic and propaganda value. Located in the heart of India’s capital, New Delhi, the site was built and lived in by India’s past Mughal rulers. Thus, for the militants, attacking the Red Fort symbolized the reconquest of South Asia in order to

\textsuperscript{112} Abou Zahab, 138-139.
\textsuperscript{113} Abou Zahab, 138.
\textsuperscript{114} Sikand, 230.
raise the flag of Islam over Delhi.\textsuperscript{115} While the attackers killed three security force personnel in the attack, all of the attackers escaped unharmed. For this reason the attack served as a huge propaganda boost, likely raising the group’s morale, manpower, and financial support. LeT’s media and propaganda arm published details about the attack and LeT even had the attackers replay the attacks for a large audience on Eid at Gaddafi stadium in Lahore.\textsuperscript{116} In February 2001 LeT carried out an attack against the airport in Srinagar in which four Indian security force personnel and two civilians are killed and all six of the attackers perished. The attack demonstrated a growing willingness to strike at softer targets. LeT also published a long article about this attack to exploit it for propaganda value.\textsuperscript{117}

In December 2001, a group of five terrorists stormed the Indian Parliament in New Delhi killing six police officers and a civilian in a gun battle that lasted about an hour. All five of the attackers were killed. One of the attackers purportedly wore a suicide vest which exploded after being hit by bullets.\textsuperscript{118} India quickly blamed LeT as well as another new Kashmir oriented terrorist organization that had come onto the scene at the time, Jaish-e-Muhammad. The accusations of LeT involvement were reportedly based on communication intercepts, though if LeT did indeed participate in the attack, it would be the first and only time LeT has been implicated in an attack involving a suicide bomber.\textsuperscript{119} Regardless of whether LeT participated or not, the attack had severe ramifications for the group particularly since it occurred shortly after September 11, 2001. After the attack, the Pakistani government briefly detained Hafiz Saeed which likely further convinced New Delhi of LeT’s involvement. The attack nearly precipitated in war between the two nuclear armed

\textsuperscript{115} Abou Zahab, 118.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 138.
\textsuperscript{117} Loc. cit.
superpowers and led to an intense 10-month military standoff.\textsuperscript{120} The international response to the attack would eventually lead Pakistan create JuD as a front organization for LeT.

Although databases on LeT attacks are generally incomplete and often inaccurate, general trends can still be culled. The Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland suggests that LeT violence peaked in 2001 and began to drop precipitously after 2002 likely due to the response in the aftermath of the Parliament attacks reaching a low in 2004 when India and Pakistan reached agreement on the Islamabad Accord.\textsuperscript{121} The combination of 9/11, the December 2001 Parliament Attack, and a peace process between India and Pakistan in 2003 likely played a role in the decline in the number and intensity of terrorist attacks in India. The intensity and scale of attacks appeared to reflect the prevailing political environment between the two countries.

LeT has continued to carry out a steady stream of attacks in Kashmir though the intensity and frequency has declined since 2002. Generally these attacks have been relatively small scale with only one or two attackers carrying them out. Attacks that LeT has been accused of undertaking include the March 2004 attack on offices of the Press Information Bureau and the Jammu and Kashmir Directorate of Information in Srinagar, the April 2005 Attack on tourist reception center in Srinagar a day before the facility would see first journey of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, and the October 2006 attack on the New Standard hotel. The last attack also happened to be the last major fidayeen attack in Srinagar until January 2010 and may have served as a precursor to the

\textsuperscript{120} “India to withdraw troops from Pak border.” \textit{The Times of India}. 16 October 2002; Available from http://www1.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/articleshow?artid=25384627.

\textsuperscript{121} “Global Terrorism Database.” \textit{University of Maryland}. Available from http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=overtime&casualties_type=&casualties_max=&perpetrator=20275.
selection of hotels for the Mumbai attacks. In that attack, police successfully evacuated all hostages and killed all three of the operatives.\textsuperscript{122}

Since 2002, LeT has also begun to shift its focus increasingly into the Indian hinterland. Several factors may account for this. To begin with, the Indian government completed a 700-kilometer border fence along the Jammu and Kashmir border in 2004 making infiltration increasingly difficult. The Indian army claimed the fence reduced infiltration of militants by 80%.\textsuperscript{123} In addition, militants stopped receiving cover fire and infiltration support from the Pakistani army following the ceasefire between the two countries in 2003. These factors have made it much more difficult to infiltrate into Kashmir and has made infiltration through transit by third countries more attractive which also increases access to the other parts of India. In addition, the predominantly Punjabi militants of LeT could likely blend in much easier in the larger and more cosmopolitan cities of the hinterland where they would not stand out among the more diverse population of these areas. Furthermore, the effectiveness of Fidayeen attacks in Kashmir may have also had diminishing returns as the Jammu and Kashmir Police developed more effective tactics to counter them. According to the Indian journalist Praveen Swami who has followed LeT closely for years, between 1999 and 2002, the worst years of LeT fidayeen attacks, less than 200 people died in them.\textsuperscript{124} Finally, Kashmiris may simply have becoming increasingly exhausted from the militancy and bloodshed in the region and may have become to harder to recruit for support.

The 2002 Gujarat riots—in which Muslims bore the greater brunt of the bloodshed—generated willing volunteers for LeT and provided new opportunities to expand its network into India. During the riots, LeT put images of the riot victims on its website and called for jihad to

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\item\textsuperscript{122} Praveen Swami, “Lashkar honed fidayeen skills in Srinagar attacks.” \textit{The Hindu}. 1 December 2008; Available from \url{http://www.thehindu.com/2008/12/01/stories/2008120155651000.htm}.
\item\textsuperscript{123} Iftikhar Gilani. “Harsh weather likely to damage LoC fencing.” \textit{Daily Times}. 4 March 2005; Available from \url{http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_4-3-2005_pg7_41}.
\item\textsuperscript{124} Praveen Swami, “Lashkar honed fidayeen skills in Srinagar attacks.”
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avenge the bloodshed. Recruiting Muslims from outside Pakistan and Kashmir could also persuade Kashmir residents that they have no future in India.\textsuperscript{125} By stoking the flames of Hindu-Muslim violence, LeT could discredit India as a democracy and reinforce its belief that Hindus cannot justly govern Muslims. Indeed, Hindu-Muslim violence tears at the very fabric of Indian society and has the potential to destabilize large swathes of India. In September of 2002, only a few months after the Gujarat riots ravaged the province, two heavily armed fighters carried out a fidayeen attack on the Akshardham temple in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The attack turned into a nearly 14 hour hostage siege and the resulted in 33 dead including a commando and a state police officer along with 70 others wounded. Given the sophisticated nature of the attack and the heavy firepower the attackers carried, the attack contained the hallmarks of a typical LeT attack and made it unlikely the attack resulted as retaliation by local Muslims for the earlier communal violence—at least without external support.\textsuperscript{126} Indeed, shortly following the Gujarat riots, Indian intelligence officials had estimated at least as many as 40 local Gujarati Muslims may have travelled to train in Lashkar camps as a result of the communal violence and LeT may have viewed an attack on the Akshardham temple attack as an opportunity to provoke further communal violence if they indeed did carry out the attack.\textsuperscript{127} Given the timing and target of the attack, the objective was clearly to provoke Hindu-Muslim violence.

In October of 2005, a series of bombings struck New Delhi only two days before the celebration of Diwali, a religious holiday important to Hindus and Sikhs. The bombings targeted two markets and a bus and killed 62 people and injured 210 others.\textsuperscript{128} Telephone intercepts

\textsuperscript{125} Praveen Swami. “Gujarat riot victims look to the Lashkar-e-Taiba.” \textit{The Hindu}. 16 August 2003; Available from \url{http://www.thehindu.com/2003/08/16/stories/2003081601471200.htm}.

\textsuperscript{126} \url{http://www.akshardham.com/gujarat/news/2002/akshardham/report.htm}

\textsuperscript{127} Praveen Swami. “Gujarat riot victims look to the Lashkar-e-Taiba.”

reportedly linked the attack to an Indian Kashmiri in collusion with LeT operatives.\textsuperscript{129} Two bombings that killed at least 20 people rocked the holy Hindu city of Varanasi in March of 2006. Indian authorities attempted to link the attack to LeT, though the true identity of the perpetrators has never been uncovered. Theories have circulated that the attack may have been in retaliation for the arrest of LeT operatives or that the attack was linked to Hindu-Muslim clashes in the city of Lucknow a few days earlier that killed four people.\textsuperscript{130} The attack raised fears of the potential outbreak of sectarian violence.\textsuperscript{131} On July 11, 2006 a series of seven bombs blasts struck the Mumbai railway system killing 209 people and injuring 700 others in the deadliest terrorist attack in Indian history.\textsuperscript{132} Indian authorities also accused the ISI and LeT of planning this attack though the case has remained unresolved.\textsuperscript{133} If LeT did in fact carry out these bombings, the choice of targeting suggests that the attacks aimed to ignite Hindu-Muslim tensions. The Mumbai train bombings has even greater implications since the selection of trains may have sought to evoke memories of the Godhra train burning incident which precipitated in the communal riots in Gujarat in 2002. Furthermore, the large scale attack on Mumbai’s public transport system likely sought to cripple the financial hub and harm the Indian economy.

\textit{2008 Mumbai Attack in Context}

The 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks marked the culmination of many of the targeting trends exhibited by LeT. The attack targeted the whole spectrum of Indian society suggesting that LeT may sought to provoke large scale reprisals against Muslims. The attacks on the Chatrapati Shivaji

\textsuperscript{131} Loc. cit.
Train Station targeted lower and middle class Indians while the attacks on the Taj Mahal Palace and Trident-Oberoi Hotels targeted both wealthy and upper class Indians as well as foreigners. The train station symbolically was named after a 17th century Hindu leader who reestablished Hindu political dominance in the region after an extended period of Muslim rule. A set of demands made by the Hindi speaking controller—later identified as the Indian national Syed Zabiuddin Syed Zakiuddin Ansari—during the attack may have evidenced LeT’s agenda. Ansari instructed the terrorist Imran Babar, who had targeted the Jewish Nariman House, to relay to the media demands for the release of all Muslims held in jail, that the Indian Army withdraw from Jammu and Kashmir, that the land of the Babri Masjid be returned to Muslims and a new mosque be rebuilt, and that “Muslim States be handed back to the Muslims.” These demands drew from some of the Muslim grievances against perceived injustices by the Hindu majority.

The selection of the Nariman House, however, marks a significant departure from traditional LeT targeting patterns. While Mumbai has always had a small indigenous Jewish population, the attackers instead targeted a Jewish site associated with Israel and international Jewish visitors. To date, India’s indigenous Jewish community has never been targeted by Islamist militants. Even more interesting was the relative obscurity of the site as most Indians living in Mumbai haven’t even heard of the location. The Indian Lashkar controller had relayed the demand the terrorist Babar that India break off its alliance with Israel possibly hinting at the reason for the selection. Indeed, both India and Israel have an extensive economic, military, and strategic relationship today even though formal relations between the two countries were not established until 1992. A study conducted by the Israeli Foreign Ministry revealed that India was the most pro-Israel country of 13 countries

134 Fair, Antecedents and Implications of the November 2008 Lashkar-e-Taiha (LeT) Attack, 12.
137 Praveen Swami. “Hindi-speaking Lashkar controller helped Mumbai assault.”
polled—even edging out the United States. In 2009, Israel surpassed Russia as India’s largest defense supplier. India has increasingly turned to Israel for the high tech and western equipment that is often superior to Russia’s offerings. Both countries also have a burgeoning intelligence and counterterrorism relationship. Both LeT and the Pakistani national security establishment likely view the strengthening Indo-Israeli ties as highly problematic.

Beyond the objectives of the plot the question remains of what triggered the audacious plot in the first place. To begin with, LeT may not have even anticipated the siege to last for as long as it did. Rather, it may have expected it to be on par with its past fidayeen operations. With that said, the number of attackers and the number of targets went well beyond the typical scope of LeT’s fidayeen operations, so LeT likely expected the attack to send a stronger message than its past operations. Nevertheless the ill-preparedness of Indian anti-terrorism forces coupled with the sensationalist media coverage that provided the attack controllers with operational cues likely made the attack more spectacular than it should have been.

By analyzing the context of the Mumbai attacks, several potential motivations for the attack may be drawn out both from the perspective of the ISI and the Army as well as LeT. Some analysts believe it unlikely that the attacks received any high level authorization due to the targeting of westerners and Jews that had the potential to trigger an American backlash. Yet in reality, the attacks came at a time when it had become more apparent that the United States was dependent on Pakistan for stabilizing Afghanistan, particularly after the security situation began to deteriorate in that country starting in 2007. Given its entrenchment in Afghanistan, it would have been highly improbable that the U.S. would jeopardize its operations in the Afghan theatre as a result of an

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140 MacDonald.
attack on an obscure Israeli target. The Nariman House may have represented a target chosen with extreme care and specifically selected for its obscurity as it would send a strong message while avoiding a significant backlash. Indeed, considering LeT’s vitriolic anti-western ideology, it is surprising they did not choose a more high profile western target.

If the ISI and/or Army approved the operation, then they may have had several motivations for doing so. First, the attack could have aimed to applying sustained pressure against India coming off the heels of an attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul--in which U.S. officials directly implicated the ISI--at a time when Pakistani security officials have worried they were being encircled by India’s growing presence in Afghanistan. Second, the targeting of the Nariman House might also strain the burgeoning defense relationship between India and Israel through which India is receiving increasingly sophisticated military equipment. Third, Pakistan has long viewed militants such as LeT as a tool to sustain the Kashmir issue until it can be resolved on more favorable terms. With the increasing attention and pressure Pakistan was receiving from Washington to counter militants on its border with Afghanistan, Pakistan may have calculated it was in a politically favorable position in which a spectacular terrorist attack in India might induce the United States or even the international community to act as a diplomatic intermediary in the resolving the Kashmir dispute with India or even possibly finally internationalizing the issue as it has long sought.

Carrying out the Mumbai attack may have also served a number of goals for LeT. First, the attacks would remind audiences in Pakistan that LeT remains the preeminent anti-Indian organization at a time when the number of terror attacks inside Pakistan had risen sharply, especially after 2007. Indeed, in recent years anti-government militants in Pakistan have been on the ascendance, partly driven by the influence of al-Qaeda. As the jihadist discourse in Pakistan has

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become increasingly anti-government rather than anti-India, LeT may have suffered some defections from militants who view it as far too close to the ISI and not having done enough in the direction of a global jihad advocated by Al-Qaeda. By carrying out these attacks, LeT might reestablish its preeminent role among militant groups in Pakistan and aid its fundraising and recruiting activities. Some elements within Pakistan might also have begun to view LeT as a moderating influence which could redirect the energies of young aggressive militants away from the state back towards its main enemy India.

**Global Operations**

Although Lashkar-e-Tayyiba has primarily focused its operations on India, they have also plotted and conducted operations around the globe. Following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, LeT used its website to recruit fighters to send to Iraq. In the spring of 2004, British forces in the southern Iraqi port city of Basra captured several LeT operatives including one Dilshad Ahmad, alias Abdul Rehman al-Dakhil, who served as an LeT operational commander and who was formerly in charge of the forward camps from which militants were launched across the Line of Control in Kashmir between 1997-2001. Ahmad was a close associate of Zaki-ur-Rahman Lakhvi and had advocated expanding the organizations operations outside of Kashmir in 1998. Nevertheless, LeT’s foray into Iraq was short-lived as it proved embarrassing for the Pakistani government. The ISI likely halted its operations in Iraq once it got wind of them. The forays into Iraq may have been initiated ad hoc rather than directed by central leadership.

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143 Mir, 71.


Since 2006, LeT has begun to grow its presence in the FATA and NWFP regions of Pakistan in order to participate in the fight against coalition forces in Afghanistan. Lashkar’s activities primarily focus on recruiting, training, and housing militants in addition to providing infiltration assistance across the Durand Line.\textsuperscript{144} Lashkar has also participated in attacks within Afghanistan including the ambush of the U.S. combat outpost in Wanat in July 2008. Coalition forces have not seen a large impact from LeT’s presence as of yet, though LeT’s militants are considered among the most effective fighters in the region.\textsuperscript{145} LeT’s spiritual home lies in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan and it has always maintained links with the country.\textsuperscript{146} While Pakistan may have restricted LeT’s activities in Iraq, it is unlikely to do the same in Afghanistan since it views the country as its sphere of influence and already allows many other groups to operate against Coalition forces from Pakistani soil.

Despite LeT’s anti-western ideology, it has only been implicated in a handful of plots targeting western interests. Interestingly, although a number of LeT cells in the United States have been uncovered; to date it has not been implicated in planning any attacks on American soil. In December 2001, French police arrested Ghulam Mustafa Rama, a British-Pakistani who had lived in Paris for 20 years, for allegedly aiding the shoe-bomber Richard Reid. Police failed to prove that case against him, however convicted and jailed him for recruiting for Lashkar-e-Tayyiba.\textsuperscript{147} A Frenchman, Willie Brigitte, was convicted of plotting terrorist attacks in Austriallia by a French court in 2007. Brigitte had trained at an LeT camp in the 2001-2002 period and that potential targets included the Sydney nuclear plant, the city’s power grid and military installations around Australia. It is difficult to discern the extent to which he received direction from LeT leadership, though they

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 18.
likely at least had knowledge and gave some approval for his activities.\textsuperscript{148} In 2006, British authorities discovered that an LeT linked charity had provided funds to support a plot to blow up ten commercial airlines. The money has reportedly been used to purchase plan tickets for the suspects to conduct dry runs of the attack though the money is believed to have come directly from the group’s network in Britain rather than being sent from Pakistan, suggesting that LeT leadership may not have known about the plot.\textsuperscript{149}

British authorities have also asserted that one of the 2005 London tube bombing perpetrators, Shahzad Tanweer, had visited LeT’s headquarters in Muridke for several days and visited a madrassa tied to LeT. Beyond this brief visit, however, there is no evidence that LeT supported or participated in the 2005 London attack.\textsuperscript{150} In October of 2009, two men tied to plotting against the Danish newspaper that had printed the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in 2005 were arrested in Chicago. One of the men was an American of Pakistani descent, David Coleman Headley, who had previously trained with LeT during the early part of the decade. Headley allegedly coordinated this plot with Abdul Rehman Hashim Syed, a former Pakistani army officer overseeing LeT’s networks in Bangladesh, and another unnamed member that some media reports have identified as Sajid Mir, LeT’s head of international operations.\textsuperscript{151}

It is difficult to discern LeT’s motivations for plotting against the West as a successful attack would likely jeopardize the safe haven it enjoys in Pakistan although it has always been vitriolically anti-western in its ideology. In some of these cases, the plots may have been undertaken by operatives who had received training through LeT but without direction from LeT’s leadership. The

\textsuperscript{149} “Brigitte jailed for planning Aust terrorist attacks.” \textit{ABC News Online Australia}. 16 March 2007; Available from \url{http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200703/s1873090.htm}.
case of Brigitte and the Australian operations as well as the Danish newspaper plot have been tied more directly to LeT. Brigitte had claimed that he acted on orders from LeT for plotting attacks in Australia, though this may very well have been a rogue operation within the group. Nevertheless, some Western officials assert that evidence clearly shows that LeT was involved in more than simply planning these operations.\textsuperscript{152} The case of Headley is more incriminating for LeT leadership. Nevertheless since the plot was relatively small scale and focused on a target that had drawn tremendous ire across the Muslim world for publishing cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, LeT may have calculated the benefits of carrying out the first successful attack against the newspaper would vastly outweigh the potential backlash. A successful attack against the target would likely have proven a great boon for fundraising and recruiting activities.

\textbf{Recruitment and Support Networks}

\textit{Domestic}

No reliable figures are available on the overall size of LeT’s support base and estimates vary widely. The State Department estimates that LeT has “several thousand” members in Pakistan administered Kashmir, Pakistan, in southern Jammu and Kashmir and Doda regions in Indian Administered Kashmir, and in the Kashmir Valley. The Dehli-based South Asia Terrorism Portal estimates that LeT has roughly 750 cadre in Jammu and Kashmir which make up the bulk of foreign fighters in the Kashmir valley.\textsuperscript{153} A midlevel officer in the ISI placed the total membership of LeT at approximately 150,000 according to a 2009 \textit{New York Times} report.\textsuperscript{154}

While LeT has traditionally focused its operations in Kashmir, in reality it has relatively few Kashmiris among its ranks. Mariam Abou Zahab, a prominent scholar of militant Islamist


\textsuperscript{153}\textit{South Asia Terrorism Portal.}

movements, conducted the most extensive study of LeT’s composition by analyzing one hundred testament
(wasiatnamali) and life stories of martyrs published between 2000 and 2003 in LeT’s monthly magazine Al Daawat and from interviews with relatives of martyrs or fighters waiting to go to Kashmir. She found that most of the militants “belong to the lower middle class and come from the towns and cities of central and south Punjab and from semi-urban neighboring villages, whose population grew exponentially in the 1980s through rural-urban migration.” She also noted that the sociological profile of the militants corresponded with that of non-commissioned officers in the Pakistani Army. In addition, according to Zahab most of the recruits do not belong to families that migrated from Indian administered Kashmir after partition but rather come from cities and towns where the majority of the population consists of migrants who came from the present-day Indian portion of Punjab.  

Zahab also found that the LeT fighters were generally in their late teens or early twenties, usually between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five years. In addition, she also found that the recruits tended to be better educated than the average Pakistani and even more so than other militant groups. Most had completed secondary school with relatively good grades and many had even gone to college where often they came into contact with LeT programs for the first time. She noted that LeT preferred to recruit educated males since they are more motivated and aware of the significance of their actions.

Both ethnically and age wise the 2008 Mumbai attackers largely conformed to the observations by Zahab’s study. Of the 10 attackers, 9 hailed from the Punjab province while one came from the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and all 10 were in their twenties in age.

Another source has suggested that militants from the predominantly Pashtun NWFP makeup the

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155 Abou Zahab, 139-140.
second largest group of LeT militants.\textsuperscript{157} Zahab also noted that most of the militants come from the lower castes of Punjab and the lone-surviving attacker Muhammad Amir Ajmal fits into this category as his family hails from the underprivileged qasai caste. Ajmal, however, also diverges from the portrait of a LeT militant framed by Zahab in many respects. Although it is unclear what lower middle class means in Pakistan, Ajmal came from a desperately poor family that could not afford to support him and sent him to live with his brother who also could barely eke out a living while taking care of him. Furthermore, Ajmal does not fit the profile of an educated militant as he was only educated through the fourth grade.\textsuperscript{158} Nevertheless it is difficult to extrapolate whether the profile of Ajmal is merely an aberration or a new trend in LeT recruiting without more data on LeT militants.

Some other militant Islamist groups have also accused LeT of promoting sectarianism among the jihadi community due to the indoctrination recruits receive into Ahl-e-Hadith during their training during in which they are also instructed to disavow their previous sectarian affiliation.\textsuperscript{159} One source has noted that the majority of men receiving training at LeT’s camps do not come from the Ahl-e-Hadith tradition but rather from other Sunni Islamic religious traditions including the Hanafi, Deobandi, and Barelvi schools of thought.\textsuperscript{160} Another militant who left LeT during training and joined another group due to its sectarianism stated that “they can tolerate Deobandis to a certain extent, but consider the Barelvis infidels and tend to detest them. When Barelvi boys come to the muaskar [training camp] a great deal of effort is spent to convert them and if they refuse to do so they are beaten up.”\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{158} Praveen Swami. “A journey into the Lashkar.”
\textsuperscript{159} “The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan,” 16.
\textsuperscript{160} Rana. \textit{A to Z of Jehadi Organizations in Pakistan}. 335.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 336.
LeT has traditionally also required parental consent before sending militants off to jihad which often may take a long time to acquire if the family has not converted to Ahl-e-Hadith. In some cases young men pressure their parents into complying or go off on their own without informing them.\textsuperscript{162} Often fathers try to give their sons money to set up a business in order to try to change their minds.\textsuperscript{163} LeT has faced some backlash for recruiting teenagers and young men. A local politician who had to negotiate with LeT to rescue his younger brother from a LeT camp noted that “there is a strong silent backlash in our communities against the LT for recruiting teenagers for training.” Another expert adds that “Most parents are angry. They question why the jihadi leaders themselves do not go for battles and why they send their own children to universities in Pakistan and abroad and not to jihad.”\textsuperscript{164} Another expert noted that in the few cases of successful rescue she found came from middle class families with the resources and connections to travel to LeT training camps in Kashmir to convince their sons to return.\textsuperscript{165}

Zahab noted that permission from the mother is often more important than receiving it from the father in Punjabi culture and LeT has actively sought to engage women in their organization.\textsuperscript{166} To this end LeT created a women’s branch, encouraged female participation in its annual convention, run madaris exclusively for women, and sought to valorize the mothers of martyrs. Farhat Haq conducted a study of women’s role in LeT through an analysis of its literature, public pronouncements, organizational activities, and interviews. According to Haq, these efforts aimed at mobilizing women for a jihadi cause were foundational in LeT’s goal of creating a militarized global ummah (community). She notes that women are also often seen as important to nurturing a “culture of jihad.” She further noted that LeT also uses a mothers’ grief to create an

\textsuperscript{162} Hasnain.  
\textsuperscript{163} Abou Zahab, 143.  
\textsuperscript{164} “The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan,” 16.  
\textsuperscript{165} Haq 19.  
\textsuperscript{166} Abou Zahab, 143-144.
emotionally charged arena that will justify its mission and hopefully increase the number of volunteers.  

Haq found that LeT has had some success in recruiting women particularly since they offered women who would normally have had few opportunities a chance to continue their education in LeT madaris and the idea of having a political ‘career’ of sorts in LeT was appealing to them. She also found, however, that most mothers were not happy to send their children to jihad. She noted that they tried different strategies to keep their sons at home including attempting to arrange marriages for them or pleading about their old age, sickness, or poverty to convince them that they need to remain at home. She found that while mothers had emotional connections with their sons, they frequently lacked the intellectual capital to understand their need for jihad and to persuade them against it. Despite fairly active efforts to enlist the support of women, however, in recent years these activities have declined. LeT’s women’s wing has largely become defunct as international pressure on Pakistan has forced LeT to reduce its public profile.  

LeT has also forged links with criminal elements based in Pakistan, the most notable being with Dawood Ibrahim’s notorious organized crime syndicate known as D-Company. Criminal syndicates usually possess operational capabilities highly desirable for terrorist organizations including smuggling routes, weapons trafficking, and money laundering. Links with organized crime can both provide additional sources of funding as well as facilitate terrorist operations. Dawood Ibrahim began his criminal career in Mumbai in the 1970s as a low-level smuggler. Throughout the 1980s he went on to form a thriving criminal enterprise. Following the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Uttar Pradesh India in December 1992 and the subsequent riots that killed hundreds of Muslims, Ibrahim became radicalized and began forging a relationship with Islamist groups and the ISI. Prior to this seminal even Ibrahim’s syndicate had been a secular organization with a sizable

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167 Haq.  
168 Haq.
Hindu membership. Reportedly with assistance from the ISI, D-Company carried out a series of bombing attacks in March of 1993 killing 257 people.\textsuperscript{169} Ibrahim’s D-Company has reportedly financed LeT’s activities, used its companies to lure recruits into LeT training camps, and given LeT operatives use of its smuggling routes and contacts.\textsuperscript{170} One media report indicated that the Mumbai attackers began their journey on a merchant vessel owned by Ibrahim though it does not indicate the source of this information.\textsuperscript{171} Another media report, citing information from the Indian Intelligence Bureau, reported that LeT had even tasked D-Company with assassinating Muhammad Amir Ajmal.\textsuperscript{172}

\textit{Connections with Other Terrorist Organizations}

Although Pakistan has supported a myriad of militant groups in pursuit of its agenda to seize the Kashmir valley from India, there is little evidence that LeT has actively cooperated with these other groups in operations although there may have been ad hoc coordination on a limited basis. As previously noted, the Indian government did accuse LeT of coordinating with Jaish-e-Muhammad in the Indian parliament attack in December 2001.\textsuperscript{173} Several factors likely have precluded active cooperation between LeT and other Kashmir-oriented terrorist organizations. To begin with, sectarian differences have likely kept the groups apart since LeT’s Ahl-e-Hadith ideology has generally been hostile to the Debonadism embraced by most of the other Kashmir groups. In addition, the ISI formed many of these groups in part to “segment” the militants in order to attract

\textsuperscript{170} Loc. cit.
different types of support as well as to make them easier to control.\textsuperscript{174} In addition, this segmentation may have been designed to increase competition among them enhancing their effectiveness in operations against India. Indeed, LeT may have stepped up the number of attacks it carried out in 2000 and 2001 to compete with attacks carried out by the newly formed Jaish-e-Muhammad.\textsuperscript{175} Finally, many of the other Deobandi terrorist organizations have been implicated in attacks inside Pakistan including sectarian violence whereas LeT has never carried out any attacks inside the country.

LeT’s growing but still peripheral role in support of the insurgency against coalition forces in Afghanistan suggests the group may also be cooperating with the Afghan Taliban. LeT, however, has never developed close ties to the Afghan Taliban largely due to the Taliban’s Deobandi affiliation. During the 1990s LeT always maintained separate training camps from the Taliban and did not fight alongside or work closely with the Taliban. Furthermore, LeT never dispatched any militants to Afghanistan to support the Taliban after the U.S. led invasion began in 2001. Instead, LeT today is primarily supporting the insurgency through another group, the Jamiat al-Dawa al-Quran wal-Sunna which is affiliated with the Ahl-e-Hadith. The Jamiat al-Dawa had initially supported the U.S. invasion but quickly joined the insurgency against it.\textsuperscript{176}

Furthermore, most evidence indicates that LeT does not have a relationship with the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), also known as the Pakistani Taliban, which has actively engaged in an insurgency targeting the Pakistani state. The TTP formed in 2007 as an amalgamation of several militant groups based in South Waziristan in the FATA region of Pakistan. The TTP, which is also a Deobandi-affiliated organization, is vehemently opposed to the Pakistani government and among its goals include waging a “defensive jihad against the Pakistan army.” The Pakistani government

\textsuperscript{175} Roy, 43.
\textsuperscript{176} Tankel. “Lashkar-E-Taiba In Perspective: An Evolving Threat,” 2.
has implicated the TTP in various suicide bombings targeting the Pakistani Army and the ISI.\textsuperscript{177} The sectarian divide, the TTP’s active use of suicide bombings, and the fact that the TTP has aggressively targeted the Pakistani state whereas LeT has remained allied with it would argue against any form of cooperation between the groups. Furthermore, the TTP has targeted LeT. The TTP reportedly killed 15 of its members in the Swat valley in 2008 and another three in the Bajaur Agency in FATA in 2009. In another infamous confrontation between LeT and the TTP in the summer of 2008, a TTP affiliated group attacked an LeT front group in the Mohmand Agency of FATA killing 10 of its members. The leader and deputy of the front group were captured and later executed despite attempts by LeT leaders of negotiating and securing their release.\textsuperscript{178}

Of all of LeT’s potential connections to other terrorist organizations, the extent of its relationship with Al-Qaeda (AQ) is the most clouded by misconceptions. Both groups, in fact, had similar origins in the 1980’s Afghan Jihad since both were formed partly through the direction of and with funds from Abdullah Azzam and the Maktab ul Khidamaat (Bureau of Services for Arab fighters). Throughout the 1990s LeT also reportedly received funding from Osama bin Laden who may have also participated in some of LeT’s general meetings. Furthermore, both groups also share a Wahhabi ideological outlook.\textsuperscript{179}

Some of the evidence that might support a strong connection between LeT and AQ include the fact that a number of Al-Qaeda operatives have reportedly received training at LeT camps including Dhiren Barot, a British citizen of Indian descent who converted from Hinduism and masterminded the failed gas-cylinder bombing plot in London and prepared blueprints of buildings in New York for Al-Qaeda, and David Hicks, an Australian who converted to Islam and was


\textsuperscript{179} Abou Zahab, 135.
captured in Afghanistan in 2001. A number of AQ operatives have also been captured in LeT safehouses, most notably Abu Zubaydah who was captured in 2002.

In reality, however, even though a number of former trainees have been found participating in AQ plots, there is no publicly available evidence that LeT has ever planned or participated in any operations with AQ. Even the capture of Abu Zubaydah, in retrospect, is suspect since subsequent evidence has strongly suggested that his role in AQ may have been greatly exaggerated and that he may have not even been a member of the group but rather a jihadi “fixer”. Furthermore, LeT has directed the bulk of its operations against India while AQ has focused primarily the West and western interests suggesting that both groups have divergent strategic objectives. AQ has also relied heavily on the use of suicide bombing for its attacks while LeT has relied primarily on fidayeen operations and never employed suicide bombings as a tactic. These divergent modus operandi would likely discourage operational coordination. Finally, AQ is likely suspicious of LeT’s close relationship with the ISI which would also deter cooperation as the ISI has coordinated the arrests of hundreds of AQ operatives in Pakistan. Furthermore, AQ’s ideology has, in part, fueled attacks inside Pakistan since it views the government as allied with the United States.

Indian and Transnational Networks

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba has always required some level of support from local Indian citizens to facilitate its operations in Kashmir and India. According to the Indian government, several Indians aided the 2008 Mumbai attacks including Arshad Ansari, Sabahuddin Ahmad, and Syed Zabiuddin Syed Zakiuddin Ansari. LeT has also connected with local militant movements in India to extend its

182 Loc. cit.
operational capabilities and expand its recruiting network. One of these groups includes the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). While SIMI was formed in 1977, at some point in the late 1990s a militant movement emerged out of the group. Some commentators suspect that SIMI has acted as a major conduit for LeT activities. Another movement also associated with LeT known as the Indian Mujahideen (IM) either emerged out of SIMI or taken over its militant elements in 2007. Many analysts consider the two groups as synonymous.\textsuperscript{184} Ideologically, IM and SIMI reject Hinduism, secularism, democracy, and nationalism.\textsuperscript{185}

The 2002 Gujarat riots likely has fueled an expansion of LeT’s network into India. LeT has actively exploited the riots to expand its network in India. Shortly following the riots, Hafiz Saeed called for the Muslims of India to rise up stating that “the riots have proved that the Hindus are fully armed but the Muslims are badly ill-equipped to cope with such a situation.” Indeed, even some women may have joined LeT as a result of the riots.\textsuperscript{186} Indian investigators believe that a Mumbai-based SIMI operative Rahil Sheikh was tasked with aiding the transit of SIMI volunteers through the Iran-Pakistan border to train at LeT camps following the communal pogrom in Gujarat. Among the volunteers included Zakiuddin Ansari, the Indian believed to have been in the control room during the 2008 Mumbai attack.\textsuperscript{187} This example may be indicative of how LeT has utilized its existing networks with a local Indian militant group to capitalize on Muslim anger at the communal violence.

In 2008, the IM claimed responsibility for several high-profile attacks and justified them as the “rise of Jihad” and the “revenge of Gujarat.”\textsuperscript{188} IM has claimed responsibility for numerous

\textsuperscript{184} C. Christine Fair. “Students Islamic Movement of India and the Indian Mujahideen: An Assessment.” \textit{Asia Policy}. Number 9 (January 2010), pgs. 105-106.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 111.
\textsuperscript{187} Praveen Swami. “Investigators put face to voice on Mumbai attack tapes.”
\textsuperscript{188} Fair. “Students Islamic Movement of India,” 112.
attacks though the Indian media frequently attributes them to LeT.\textsuperscript{189} Christine Fair, an expert on South Asia, has suggested that this is likely due to its reluctance to acknowledge an indigenous threat as well as the political interest in attributing India’s security challenges to Pakistan.\textsuperscript{190} The extent to which LeT controls and supports SIMI and IM operations remains murky, though if it has sought to exploit Muslim-Hindu discord then having Indians carry out attacks on its behalf would likely bolster these aims. Indeed, the very name “Indian Mujahideen” may evoke perceptions that India’s Muslims are a potential fifth column. Reluctance to acknowledge the indigenous threat may be designed to prevent a future cycle of violence where attacks attributed to Muslims fuel distrust among Hindus and potentially spark a communal backlash which in turn radicalizes more Muslims.

LeT has also used the Persian Gulf as a recruiting and logistical hub for its jihad against India. The Gulf offers convenient points for LeT leaders to interface with its Indian operatives and attractive transit point for moving both people and resources into and out of India. The Gulf’s large Indian diaspora, it also offers a fertile ground for recruitment. For example, Ali Abdul Aziz al-Hooti was one of LeT’s leading organizers in the Gulf. He transferred money and weapons into India and assisted with sending recruits for training in Pakistan. al-Hooti sent Fahim Ansari, one of the Indian’s arrested for conducting surveillance to support the November 2008 Mumbai attacks for LeT, to Pakistan to train with LeT.\textsuperscript{191}

\textit{International Recruitment and Networks}

While the vast majority of LeT members continue to be Pakistanis, various LeT cells have also been uncovered globally and many of these were previously mentioned. LeT dispatched militants to Iraq following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 though following the arrest of Dilshad

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 116.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
Ahmad and several other LeT operatives in Basra in 2004 LeT was likely reined in by the Pakistani government since no more LeT activity has been observed in that country since then.\textsuperscript{192} French police also convicted Ghulam Mustafa Rama, a British citizen of Pakistani descent, of recruiting for LeT.\textsuperscript{193} The Frenchman, Willie Brigitte, was convicted of plotting terrorist attacks in Australia by a French court in 2007. Brigitte had claimed that he acted on orders from LeT for plotting attacks in Australia and some Western officials assert that evidence clearly shows that LeT was actively involved in these operations.\textsuperscript{194}

Several LeT operatives have also been arrested in the United States. These include a network of jihadists in northern Virginia known as the Virginia Jihad Network. Ali al-Timimi, an American born Islamic scholar popular among a group of young Muslim men in Virginia, was convicted of advocating war against the U.S. He exhorted his followers to join the Taliban following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. While none of them ever did join the Taliban, four of them ended up receiving training from LeT.\textsuperscript{195} Ali Asad Chandia, a resident of College Park, Maryland and third grade teacher, was convicted of aiding a British member of LeT, Mohammed Ajmal Khan, with acquiring military equipment for LeT.\textsuperscript{196} Nine other members of the network were convicted in 2003 and 2004 variously for providing material support to LeT, assisting others in gaining entry into LeT training camps, and for obtaining training to wage war against the United States.\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{192} Mir, 71.
Kapisthalam.
\textsuperscript{193} “FACTBOX-Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba.”
The most notable American operative of LeT is David Headley. As previously noted, the American-born Headley had legally changed his name from Daoud Gilani to make travel easier and moved effortlessly between the U.S., Pakistan, and India for nearly seven years. According to Headley’s plea agreement, he made at least five trips to Mumbai between 2006 and 2008 to scout locations for attacks and scouted targets in Pune and Goa in India. While in Mumbai, he made videos of the targets, collected coordinates with a GPS device, and scouted the landing site for the attackers. Between 2002 and 2005, Headley had trained at Lashkar camps on at least five occasions. During this training he learned the use of explosives, small arms and countersurveillance techniques.

Although LeT has trained a number of foreigners, it is unclear if it has actively recruited them or done so to establish networks in the West and globally. Many of the foreigners may have become radicalized and simply found their way to LeT training camps since these were the most accessible. As already noted, LeT has largely avoided government crack downs and their training camps have been allowed to continue to operate. Omar Khyam, a British Al-Qaeda operative of Pakistani descent convicted of being the ring leader of a plot to attack targets in the United Kingdom, testified that upon landing in Pakistan, he told his cab driver to take him to “the office of the mujahideen” after which the cab driver took him to a LeT office. Since LeT also aims to proselytize, it is unlikely it would turn recruits away. Regardless of the intent, LeT has clearly utilized western recruits for recruiting and fundraising purposes as well as to extend its operational capabilities.

198 Jane Perlez. “American Terror Suspect Traveled Unimpeded.”
199 Loc. cit.

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V. Implications and Conclusion

As the foregoing analysis reveals, Pakistan continues to sustain Lashkar-e-Tayyiba’s operational capabilities in order to preserve it as a strategic asset against India. Furthermore, although LeT’s global reach has become more apparent, it continues to focus its efforts on India and has expanded its strategy to provoking Hindu-Muslim discord in order to both increase its operational capabilities and in order to have a greater destabilizing impact on India. Finally, both India and the United States will have limited leverage to force Pakistan to rein in LeT. Pakistan’s nuclear umbrella insulates it from a strong military response from India, and the U.S. has grown highly dependent on Pakistan for the success of its operations in Afghanistan.

Even as Pakistan has sought to retain LeT’s operational capabilities both India and the United States will have very limited leverage to prevent it from doing so. The U.S. will not be able to pressure Pakistan as long as it remains dependent on it as its main supply artery into Afghanistan. The U.S. should look towards improving its relationship with Russia and seeking alternative supply routes through central Asia into Afghanistan in order to reduce its dependence on Pakistan. Pakistan has not demonstrated itself as a reliable partner in the global war on terror due to its continued support for militants such as LeT and tacit support it provides insurgents targeting U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the U.S. dependence on Pakistan may have strengthened its resolve to retain LeT’s operational capability. Indeed, if the U.S. remains dependent on Pakistan and a LeT cell successfully carries out a terrorist attack in the West, U.S. policy options to respond would be extremely limited unless it chose to risk jeopardizing operations in Afghanistan. By reducing its dependence on Pakistan, the United States could open up additional leverage that it can apply to force Pakistan to rein in militants such as LeT. Even the threat of losing some of the U.S. economic
and military aid used to buy supply route access and may alter Pakistan’s calculations on continued support for militant groups such as LeT.

In the interim, the U.S. may be able to quietly pressure the ISI to monitor LeT’s training camps to prevent westerners from attending and thus limiting LeT’s operational reach in the West, if such efforts are not already underway. The U.S. can also try to gain the cooperation of the ISI in exposing some LeT’s international networks in the West which may not serve Pakistan’s interests. Nevertheless these limited actions hardly provide a long term solution to the threat that LeT poses. Until the U.S. can create additional leverage over Pakistan, its policy against LeT will, at best, be defensive and reactive.

Given Pakistan’s nuclear umbrella, India also has limited leverage to compel Pakistan to end support for LeT and few options to respond to future LeT attacks. It is unclear whether India has the military capacity to carry out surgical strikes against LeT infrastructure in Pakistan. Regardless of whether or not it has the capability, such actions would carry the potential of resulting in a major war that could further escalate into a nuclear confrontation. Even if a war did not result, such an attack at best might temporarily inhibit LeT’s operational capabilities but in the long run further fuel support for militancy in Pakistan.

India can take steps to mitigate LeT’s operational capabilities and limit the effectiveness of its attacks. First, India should work to improve the lot of Muslims in the country. While the vast majority of Indian Muslims have rejected terrorism, it requires only a handful of radicalized local operatives to facilitate and carry out devastating attacks in the country. Indian Muslims also tend to typically be poorer and have less access to education and jobs than their Hindu compatriots. Some of the Indian Muslim community’s grievances are very real as indicated by the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1993 and the Gujarat pogroms in 2002 in which Muslim communities experienced
the vastly disproportionate blunt of communal violence. This should include steps to rein in
fundamentalist Hindu organizations and may possibly entail introducing hate crimes legislation—
and actual prosecution—of those that initiate violence against Muslims. Indeed, the organizers of
the Gujarat pogroms in 2002 largely went unprosecuted.

Second, India will need to vastly improve its anti-terrorism measures as indicated by the
effectiveness of the 2008 Mumbai attacks in which its security forces were clearly ill-prepared. India
will need to invest heavily in its internal security including training, human capital, and equipment.
Since stability in South Asia is a key U.S. priority, the U.S. might also assist India in these efforts
through the provision of funds and anti-terrorism equipment and training. Domestic opinion in
India may force India to respond much more harshly against Pakistan should a future devastating
terrorist attack occur potentially destabilizing the whole of South Asia. Thus, it would be beneficial
to both U.S. and Indian interest to limit the impact from a future mass casualty terrorist attack.

For Pakistan LeT has proven both an effective and reliable partner. Indeed, unlike many
other militant organizations it has supported in the past, LeT has never engaged in any attacks inside
Pakistan. Furthermore, it likely feels more secure in maintaining LeT as a proxy force since the
leverage the U.S. has to pressure Pakistan has dropped to its lowest point since 2001. Nevertheless
while the ISI may be able to control LeT inside Pakistan, it likely has far less control of LeT’s
extended networks both in India and the West which may have differing interests and motivations.
These extended networks may undertake operations that the ISI does not view in its interests and
unnecessarily exacerbate its tensions with both India and the West.
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