

Understanding the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba

Rohit Singh



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Deputy Editor : Mr Samarjit Ghosh
Copy Editor : Ms Rehana Mishra



Centre for Land Warfare Studies

RPSO Complex, Parade Road, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi 110010

Phone: +91.11.25691308 Fax: +91.11.25692347

email: landwarfare@gmail.com website: www.claws.in

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email: mail@kwpub.in / knowledgeworld@vsnl.net

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Understanding the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba

Introduction

Since the 1980s, Pakistan has been using its proxies to wage a low-intensity war against the Indian state, primarily in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and the Northeast. The Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) is one such proxy which has kept the embers of insurgency burning in J&K and poses the most potent sub-conventional threat to the Indian hinterland in particular and the world community, especially the United States and the Western countries and the Jewish community, in general. Spectacular attacks carried out by this group, from the attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001, to the assault on the city of Mumbai on 26 November 2008, have brought it to the attention of the world. Increasingly, a number of terrorist attacks in the US and Britain have been traced to LeT training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The group continues to flourish in Pakistan, particularly in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), where it has developed linkages with Al Qaeda, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network, among others. Significantly for India, it has cultivated hundreds of sleeper cells and has fomented an indigenous group, the Indian Mujahideen (IM), comprising Indian Muslims, to spread its tentacles even deeper into the Indian hinterland. Most of the terror attacks in 2007 in the Indian heartland were traced to support bases in J&K, with the larger agenda to not only wrest Kashmir from India, but to extend its (LeTs) reach into significant swathes of India.

The LeT is an ideological affiliate of Al Qaeda and a covert instrument of the Pakistan Army, with considerable support in that country (Pakistan) among the poorer as well as the middle class sections of the society, for its educational and charitable outreach programmes.¹

It is one of the constitutive elements of what is conveniently called Al Qaeda:

...There indeed exists in our world what Osama bin Laden called the “International Islamic Front for *Jihad* against Jews and Crusaders,” which is like a constellation of atoms aggregated around a central nucleus.²

Not only does it exist in the notorious and officially ungovernable ‘tribal zones’ on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, it is known to stem from all parts of the country, and is a group with great political influence. LeT militants have been known to belong to Muzaffarabad, Lahore, Multan, Bahawalpur, Karachi, Charsadda, Naushera, Peshawar, Mardan and the Malakand division.

As the LeT presence spreads into large parts of central and southern Pakistan and its western tribal regions, it shows signs of breaking out of the control of its current masters, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). This umbilical cord remains unbroken only so long as the LeT (at the leadership level) chooses not to attack the Pakistani state’s interests. But at the operational (field) level, there are growing signs of inter- and intra-terrorist cooperation, in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which may have harmful repercussions on the Pakistani establishment – albeit, only indirectly at present.

The single most dangerous portent of the rise of the LeT is the match it enjoys, in terms of ideology, aims and cooperation, with Al Qaeda – which goes beyond Kashmir, to the rest of India, the US, other Western countries, Israel, and the Arab states enjoying US patronage.

Origin and Development

The origin and birth of the the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT), the Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI), and the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JUD), can be traced to Abdullah Azzam. Born in Jenin (now in Palestine), in 1941, Azzam fled to Jordan after Israel captured the West Bank in 1967. He studied at Cairo’s Al-Azhar University, then taught at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where he also met Osama bin Laden. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Azzam, already chafing from the humiliation of his homeland by the Israelis, found an outlet for his rage. In a 1984 book, he advanced the theory that religious war to liberate Muslim lands from foreign

occupation was compulsory for all Muslims, and as important a religious rite as fasting and praying. The book galvanised an international Islamist movement, and not long after it was published, Azzam moved to Peshawar – the staging area for the anti-Soviet resistance. Here, he set up the Makhtab-al-Khidmat, to organise and fete the influx of Arab volunteers. This effort was funded and supported by Osama bin Laden. Together, they published the magazine *Al Jihad*, which glorified battle and denounced the Soviet atrocities, and sought donations to further their work. Once the Soviets withdrew, Azzam endeavoured to take *jihad* back to Palestine against Israel. However, at this point of time, the *jihad* movement was appropriated by the radical Arab-Egyptian, Dr Ayman al Zawahiri, who urged the overthrow of Arab regimes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Azzam fell out with him since he did not believe in fighting Muslims and killing civilians, kidnapping, hijacking airplanes, explosions in public places, in the name of *jihad*. Al Zawahiri got bin Laden to fund his cause and Azzam went on to establish the Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI), with Hafiz Saeed and Zafar Iqbal. Before Azzam could go further, he was eliminated under mysterious circumstances. His mantle was inherited by Hafiz Saeed, who, after Azzam's murder, quickly picked up the pieces of the MDI, and the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (Army of the Pure or Army of Medina) was born in 1987.

According to Ashley Tellis,

The LeT is composed primarily of Pakistani Punjabis and has been so from its inception. In fact, its Punjabi composition, along with its inflexible ideology, is precisely what made it so attractive to the ISI to begin with, because it could be controlled and directed far more effectively by its Punjabi-dominated sponsor, the Pakistan Army, than any local Kashmiri resistance group. Because of LeT's founding ties to Al Qaeda, however, its Punjabi core has over the years been episodically supplemented by Libyans, Central Asians, and Sudanese – although these non-Pakistani elements have generally been marginal to the group's numerical strength.³

The LeT cadres are *Sunni* Muslims and follow the radical *Wahhabi* school of thought. However, unlike the Sipah-e-Sahiba, the LeT does not believe in persecuting the *Shia* sect. A study of testimonials published in the group's

magazine *Al Dawaat* show that the LeT cadres belong to lower middle class families from south and central Punjab (Pakistan). They also belong to semi-urban neighbouring villages, many of them petty shopkeepers, Saudi Arabia-returned migrants, men and junior rungs of the Pakistan Army. A majority of the cadres are not only from the *madrasas* but also public and other schools opened by the LeT. They are far more educated than the other militant groups operating inside Pakistan. However, a significant cadre base has also sprung up from the educated unemployed.⁴

The LeT's earliest armed actions were in the Afghan provinces of Kunar and Paktia during the *mujahideen* struggle against the USSR. It set up a series of terrorist training camps in these two provinces. With the passage of time, these camps were merged with the Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan. After the retreat of the USSR from Afghanistan, the ISI used the LeT in the internecine conflict for Kabul. As part of the Islamic Caliphate and its avowed aim to recover "lost Muslim lands" in Asia and Europe, the LeT has sent its *lashkar* to Palestine, Spain, Chechnya, Kosovo and Eritrea.

The LeT's earliest forays in India commenced with attacks on the Security Forces (SF) in Kashmir in 1993. This was the year the indigenous Kashmiri uprising began to wane. The ISI realised that the Kashmir armed movement would peter out, if it was not propped up. The LeT, which had already been baptised under fire in Palestine, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, fitted into the ISI's scheme of affairs. However, it was only from 2005 that it really began to concentrate its attacks on a pan-Indian scale. Before that, it had been involved in attacks on the Red Fort and the Indian Parliament in 2000 and 2003, respectively.

Goals and Objectives

An *Ahl-e-Hadith* adherent of *Sunni Wahhabism*, the LeT seeks to establish a universal Islamic Caliphate. Towards this end, it endeavours to recapture or liberate all "lost Muslim lands," in Asia and Europe. Its earliest involvement in global *jihad* began with the struggle in Palestine, Spain, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kosovo and Eritrea. The LeT's goals are spelt out in its manifesto called *Hum Jihad Kyon Karte Hain (Why We Do Jihad)*:

- To defend a Muslim state.
- To liberate Muslim countries from non-Muslim occupation.

- To avenge the death of Muslims at the hands of non-believers.
- To contribute to the spread of Islam.
- To spearhead the Islamic banner.
- To coerce non-Muslims to pay tax (*Jizya*),
- To assist the weak and powerless.
- To punish enemies who break treaties and renege on promises.

The LeT's objectives were symbolically shown on its websites, such as on <http://www.jamaatuddawa.org>, which showed a dagger penetrating the national flags of the United States, Russia, United Kingdom, India and Israel.

The LeT steered clear of Al Qaeda, initially. However, when US missile attacks in August 1998, intended against Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, instead killed scores of LeT operatives and trainers, the LeT resolved to wage a war against the US. The LeT's cooperation with Al Qaeda had, thus, begun, although it continued to operate independently for the most part.

The LeT's initial focus on Afghanistan in the 1980s is significant, in that it clarifies the misperception of the LeT being a Kashmir-centric organisation. In fact, far from being a Kashmir-centric organisation, Hafiz Saeed asserted in a 1999 interview,

The *jihad* is not about Kashmir only...fifteen years ago, people might have found it ridiculous if someone told them about the disintegration of the USSR...today, I announce the break up of India. *Inshallah*, we will not rest until the whole (of) India is dissolved into Pakistan.⁵

This viewpoint was reinforced US Congressman Gary L Ackerman,

...But the idea that this group can be appeased on the subject of Kashmir (alone) is dangerous nonsense.⁶

Its aim with relation to India was also spelt out by Hafiz Saeed,

Pakistan is a country for Muslims of the subcontinent. Therefore, it is incomplete without Kashmir. Pakistan is also incomplete without Hyderabad, Junagarh and Munabao...our agenda (is) to take these states back through *jihad*...⁷

If analysts thought that Mumbai 26/11 would change things, it was not to be. In a joint meeting of leaders from the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and the LeT in Muzaffarabad (POK) on 04 February 2009, the leaders asserted that *jihad* was the only way to bring about a solution to the Kashmir conflict.⁸ The next day, the LeT took out a “Kashmir rally” in Lahore under a new name, Tanzeem-e-Azadi-e-Kashmir. However, it was only post 9/11 and Mumbai 26/11, that the world community acknowledged the threat LeT, poses not only to India and the subcontinent, but the global community as well. According to Stephen Tankel,

Following 9/11, LeT...also waged a peripheral campaign against the West. In the early part of the decade, this was mainly in the form of training and logistical support to Al Qaeda...Although it remains primarily committed to destroying India, LeT has begun to act more overtly against Western interests...This includes deploying cadres to fight against coalition forces in Afghanistan and, more recently, targeting Westerners in attacks such as those carried out in Mumbai...The Mumbai attacks thus represent only the latest step in the Lashkar’s progression towards Al Qaeda’s global *jihad*.⁹

Ideology

The LeT draws from the *Ahl-e-Hadith* sect of Islam, which is similar to the *Wahhabi* philosophy of the *Deobandis* (who originate from North India) to which the Taliban belongs.¹⁰ However, unlike the *Deobandis* who followed the *Hanafi* school of *Sunni* jurisprudence, the *Ahl-e-Hadith* believers take the *Hadith* (Traditions of the Prophet) as the moral and ethical source of guidance. Key ingredients of this interpretation of Islam include: the duty to establish a Caliphate with one flag, one army, one religion; the country to be governed by Islamic religious law (*Shariah*); all of Allah’s dictates to be implemented; democracy contradicts Islam; the Islamic state may be brought about peacefully or violently; and Muslims are obliged to join *jihad* to make Islam the world’s dominant religion. In resonance with this world view, global *jihad* will be perpetrated to overthrow the rule of infidels such as the US, Jews, Hindus and Christians, wherein it is the duty of all such ‘liberators’ to undergo military training in bases provided by them (the LeT). The LeT’s insignia, in fact, contains a verse from the *Koran*, calling for *jihad* to turn Islam into the dominant religion of the entire world.

Thus, there is a close alignment between the LeT and Al Qaeda world view. Noted researcher Bruce Reidel says,

The ideology of Al Qaeda, the ideology of global Islamic *jihād* that all *jihadists* should focus on the United States as the ultimate enemy is gaining ground with groups beyond Al Qaeda.¹¹

According to Daniel Benjamin, a counter-terrorism official with the US State Department,

Lashkar-e-Taiba has made it clear that it is willing to undertake bold, mass casualty operations with a target set that would please Al Qaeda planners.¹²

The Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JUD) is the socio-religious, cultural, spiritual and educational driving force behind the armed wing represented by the LeT. Its head office is located at Muridke, Lahore, and its provincial offices are at Hasrat Mohani Street, Fawara Chowk and Peshawar cantonment. The JUD was placed on the US State Department's terrorism 'watch list' on 15 November 2003 and was finally banned by the UN in the aftermath of 26/11. However, as with all such organisations, it has been quick to change names to escape the effect of the ban. In the case of the JUD, the Indian intelligence agency Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW) has been alarmed by the sudden influx of close to 22,000 JUD activists into the Falah-e-Insaniyat foundation, a charitable organisation with close links to the JUD. The spurt in its activities have been very pronounced, post Hafiz Saeed's release. Charity work has been undertaken by them in the Swat Valley, where thousands of people have been forced to abandon their houses because of the conflict between the state services and the Pakistani Taliban. Falah was always reported to be one of the arms of JUD and operated from a Jamaat centre located at Chauburji in Lahore. In the opinion of strategic affairs expert Brahma Chellaney,

It is history repeating itself into the pattern we have been witnessing since 9/11, of terrorist groups rising again by rechristening themselves. (JUD was earlier said to have renamed itself Tehreek-Hurmat-e-Rasool.)

The JUD runs over 160 schools, 150 health centres, eight hospitals and 50 *madrasas* across Pakistan. All the JUD (LeT) schools, with 35,000 students on its rolls, follow the pattern of curriculum and text-books decided by Prof Zafar Iqbal, a founding member of MDI, then JUD, and a close associate of Hafiz Saeed. The JUD set up a network of educational institutions throughout Pakistan to train the new generation of *mujahideen*. While one institution taught students about the *Koran*, *Ahl-e-Hadith*, *Fiqh*, *Tafseer* and *Shariah*, the other institutions (English-medium general public schools), taught modern education to produce outstanding students who could play a stellar role in society. These citizens would then contribute to the growth of the organisation and the ideology it stood for. Ja'miah-ad-Da'wah-a-Islamiah University is its premier institution, which has under its fold 14 schools called 'Mahad'. Approximately, 5,000 students, including 1,000 foreigners, are learnt to have graduated from this university so far.

The LeT's propaganda network is mostly carried out by the JuD. It operates several websites, publishes periodicals and books, and distributes tapes of Hafiz Saeed. Most of these are in the Urdu language, in addition to Arabic and English versions, addressing all sections of society. From monthly publications like *Ud-Dawa*, *Voice of Islam*, *Irada Khidmat-e-Halla*, *Al Rabat* and *Zarb-e-Tayyeba*, to weekly ones like *Ghazwa*, *Al Anfal* and *Jihad Times*, these magazines preach the LeT world view.

Organisation

Organisational Structure

Like the armed forces, the LeT's organisational structure is hierarchical. Hafiz Saeed is the Army equivalent of a Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and has various commanders/ deputies, imitating the Army equivalent of Army commanders, staff officers, etc. There are commanders for operations, supply, fundraising, training, recruitment, health care, education, emergency services and religious education. Its military arm is led by a theatre commander, i.e. one each for J&K, Afghanistan and Iraq. Under the theatre commander, the LeT has a chief operational commander and a launching chief. The theatre commanders also have under them divisional commanders responsible for districts, and battalion commanders working in specific areas within the district.

According to Tellis,

Because LeT was from the very beginning a preferred ward of the ISI, enjoying all the protection offered by the Pakistan state, the vulnerability that traditionally afflicts all hierarchic terrorist group was believed to be minimal in this case.¹³

Leadership

- *Amin* and Supreme Commander – Professor Hafiz Mohd Saeed alias Tayazi.
- Chief – Abdul Wahid Kashmiri.
- Chief Commander for J&K – Shahji of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan, appointed in place of Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi alias Chachaji.
- Chief Operational Commander – Abdullah Shahad alias Abu Anas.
- Chief of Communication – Formerly Zarar Shah, now Shahji – entrusted with dual charge.
- Chief Finance Manager – Haji Mohammed Ashraf.
- LeT Spokesperson – Abdul Muntazir alias Abdullah Ghaznavi.
- Central Information Secretary – Yahya Mujahid.

The LeT uses code names for its office bearers. The real names of the office bearers traced so far are:

- Ishfaq Khan – District *Amir*, Peshawar
- Mian Muhammad Wasif – Secretary, Public Relations
- Fazal-ur-Rehman – Office Secretary, Peshawar

Important Launching and Action Commanders

- Abu Muzammil – Action India
- Azam Chima – Action India
- Abu Al Qama – Launching and Action India
- Abu Samas – North Kashmir

Recruitment Base

The LeT has a well-oiled recruitment mechanism in south and central Punjab. Though the number of recruits may have gone down in the recent times, the

infrastructure (*madrasas* and mosques) remains in place. A survey of 10 major terrorist groups in 2004 showed that over 10,000 *shaheed* came from Punjab. It is relevant to note that a large number of the Pakistan Army's officers and men also belong to Punjab. Over 66 percent of the officers are recruits from Punjab, a large number of whom are from the south and central areas. Between 1996 and 2005, for instance, 262 officers came from Jhelum, 774 from Lahore, 227 from Multan, 1373 from Rawalpindi and 283 from Sialkot. These are the areas where groups like the LeT have considerable presence and acceptability among the lower middle and middle class sections of the society.¹⁴

Training

The LeT sends its volunteers to different training camps. The training is of two types:

- *Suffa* is a three weeks programme, mostly theoretical in nature, consisting of lectures and a little physical training.
- *Alaima* and *Khassa* are spread over 90 days, and consist of physical training, classroom lectures, and training in weapons and explosive handling. The military training includes field craft, field signals, fire and move, small arms fire, including grenades, rocket launchers, and surface-to-air missiles. Specialised training is given to those selected for special missions like Mumbai 26/11, snow warfare, sea diving, slithering, etc. A typical day in a *jihadi* training camp (the entrance displaying the motto "Jihad for Peace") starts at 4 in the morning and ends at 9 in the evening. The daily routine includes physical training, weapons training and firing, obstacle course, and games. *Namaz* is offered at least 3-4 times a day. Communications training includes short messaging services on mobile phones, internet messaging and so forth. To circumvent interception by the security forces, the terrorists are increasingly resorting to courier messages, dismantling mobile sets once a conversation is over, communicating more in crowded urban centres and other similar tactics. Leaders use Thuraya satellite phones, aided by Pakistani transmissions which screen their conversations. A new advent in training is explosions training called *Daura-e-Mutafajjirat*, which includes planting of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), use of timer devices, etc.

The prominent training camps include:

- Al Massada (Muzaffarabad).
- Moaskar al Aqsa (Muzaffarabad).
- Ibn Taimiyya (Muzaffarabad).
- Abdullah bin Massooud (Muzaffarabad).
- Baitul Mujahideen [House of the Holy Warrior] (Shawai Nala, Muzaffarabad).
- Maskai-e-Ummalkura (Tent camp, Muzaffarabad).
- Manshera.
- Balakot.
- Sialkot.

The use of small arms, including pistols, automatic rifles, grenades, plastic explosives, rifles, grenades, and mortars has been the norm in most LeT attacks. The group also specialises in suicide bombings, including car bombings. In Afghanistan, where the LeT carries out recruitment for suicide bombings, it uses crew-served weapons, mines, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and even an antique air defence system.

International and Domestic Linkages

Since its creation in 1987, the LeT has been linked to the ISI, the formidable intelligence agency that operates like a 'state within a state' in Pakistan. From the kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl in January 2002, to the attack on the Indian Parliament, the bombings in Delhi, Mumbai, Varanasi, Nagpur, Bangalore and the 26/11 Mumbai carnage, there is abundant evidence that the *jihadi* wing of the ISI has assisted the LeT in the planning, financing and operationalising of various attacks.

Insofar as India is concerned, the LeT figured in the ISI's scheme of things from 1993 onwards. The LeT's primarily Punjabi orientation meant that the ISI could always control their actions. They were good, lethal replacements for the mild indigenous militants in J&K such as the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) or the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM). That they shared no affinity with the local population was another advantage. More significantly, it permitted Pakistan to pursue an agenda larger than Kashmir.

According to Tellis,

By employing ideologically charged Islamist foot soldiers from outside the disputed state, a cohort, that hailing from the Pakistan Punjab, carried with it all of Islamabad's pent up animosities towards India, the local struggle over Kashmir's status could be expanded into a larger war aimed at destroying India itself.¹⁵

Starting with its involvement in Afghanistan, the LeT has been one of the key beneficiaries of ISI support. The ISI has maintained strong institutional, albeit subterranean links with the LeT and has supported its operations through generous financing and combat training. It has provided the LeT with sophisticated weapons and explosives, specialised communications gear, and various kinds of operational assistance, as it conducted its missions in Afghanistan and India. According to Wilson John,

It is well known that terrorist groups like LeT could not have weathered eight years of global sanctions without the support of the state.¹⁶

Consider also the following:

- The JUD (LeT) headquarters at Muridke and Al Qadisiya Mosque, Lahore, are a stone's throw away from 4 Corps Headquarters.
- The July 2008 Kabul bombing was carried out by an LeT suicide bomber. The conspiracy was masterminded by the ISI and there were reports of their COAS, Gen Kiyani, being privy to it.¹⁷
- As DG ISI, Kayani influenced the release of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) Chief Fazlur Rehman Khalil (December 2004), and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI) Chief Qari Saifullah Akhtar (May 2007).
- In September 2006, Kayani released more than 2,600 terrorist suspects – two of them being HuJI operational commanders Sohail Akhtar and Fazl Karim (the latter being a prime suspect in Daniel Pearl's murder).
- Kayani facilitated the establishment of training camps in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA for aspiring recruits for Kashmir and Afghanistan, from the frontier and FATA towns.¹⁸
- Lt Gen Nadeem Taj, who succeeded Kiyani as ISI chief, continued to fan *jihadi* attacks in Kashmir, by allowing the LeT and other militant groups

a free run inside Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). As of now, Taj is GOC 30 Corps at Gujranwala.

- Brig Izaz Shah who worked under both Kiyani and Taj, persuaded the Taliban to hand over two of its training camps in Khost to Al Qaeda, for them to train Kashmiri *jihadis*. Shah masterminded Daniel Pearl's murder through JeM's Syed Omer Sheikh.
- Brig Riazullah Khan Chibb, a retired ISI officer, named by Benezir Bhutto as incharge of election rigging, was a close associate of Brig Izaz Shah.¹⁹ Chibb was a senior officer in ISI's Joint Intelligence Bureau (JIB). The latter's jurisdiction is PoK, Gilgit and Ballistan. Chibb's name surfaced in India in August 2006, when the Delhi Police arrested an individual by the name of Abu Anas.²⁰ Anas confessed that he was Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi's close confidante. He revealed that the LeT commanders, Army and ISI officers met every month to share information; ISI officials briefed LeT commanders about regular updates on the Indian security forces and discussed plans to counter the Indian strategy. The ISI-LeT meetings have also been monitored by US intelligence agencies.
- Post 26/11, Hafiz Saeed's release is well documented. Even before that, many of the LeT's detained leaders had been set free. They were even permitted to organise a public rally in Lahore in January 2009. Prior to raiding the JUD headquarters at Muridke, the police forewarned their leaders, who decamped with relevant documents.
- Despite evidence provided by India (a list of 22 accused has been provided by India to Pakistan), ably assisted by the US' Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI),²¹ on the LeT's role in 26/11, the Pakistani government continues to drag its feet in the investigations and bringing the accused to book.

General David Petraeus has gone on record to state that,

There is no question that there are elements in Pakistan that have not yet been the focus of the Pakistan counter-insurgency efforts...the use of the LeT and the need to take action against it has been a source of dialogue with Pakistan authorities.²²

Much in the same vein, Said T Jawad, Afghanistan's Ambassador to the United States, says,

We are seeing the Pakistanisation of Al Qaeda...Pakistanis are moving higher up in Al Qaeda and more Pakistanis are getting recruited to carry out operations.²³

Steve Coll believes that the LeT follows an 'informal policy', by which its operatives may take 'leave' to assist in Al Qaeda operations.²⁴ Stephen Tinkel, who has traced the LeT's cooperation with the Afghan Taliban, Tehrik-e-Taliban, Hujj, JeM and Al Qaeda, confirms this view, stating that a number of Al Qaeda plots have been conceived using trainees from LeT camps.²⁵ Notable Al Qaeda members who have trained at LeT camps include David Hicks (Australian-born) – convicted 'shoe bomber', Richard Reid, and Dhiren Barot (mastermind of the failed gas-cylinder bombing in London).

Al Qaeda and LeT: The LeT's cooperation with Al Qaeda extends to areas of planning, financing, recruitment, training and administrative support. Abu Zubaydah, a very senior Al Qaeda operative, was apprehended in a LeT safe house in Faisalabad in 2002. Osama bin Laden is reported to have contributed Rs 10 million for the construction of a mosque in Muridke at MDI headquarters.²⁶

LeT and Taliban/Neo-Taliban/Hizb-e-Islami (Hel): There are reports of the LeT recruiting Afghan refugees to fight the Karzai regime and collecting donations on behalf of the Afghan Taliban in Jalozai.²⁷ LeT activities in close cooperation with Hel have been reported in Nuristan, Afghanistan, which is home to the pro-Pakistan Hel.²⁸

This LeT-Hel cooperation in Nuristan has ominous portents for India, as it implies that the LeT benefits a lot from the Hel's fighting capabilities, tactics, knowhow and experience. There are uncorroborated reports of Hel fighters intended to be used in J&K in the future, once these fighters are relieved of their primary task of fighting the Americans in Afghanistan. US troops who have encountered LeT fighters in eastern Afghanistan rate them to be the first among equals.

There are reports of Ilyas Kashmiri complementing the Afghan Taliban operations in southern and southeastern Afghanistan, and Kabul. In close co-

operation with the Pashtun ethnic group, Kashmiri is said to be crafting a 'neo-Taliban' strategy for Afghanistan-Pakistan-India, in order to spread mayhem in all these countries through high-profile attacks and kidnappings. This 'neo-Taliban' group is reported to be composed of Arab and former Kashmiri militants. In the event of being relieved in Afghanistan or even otherwise, the likelihood of this group shifting its operations to J&K will have significant implications for India's security forces.²⁹ Ilyas Kashmiri is being helped by the powerful Mehsud tribe, which forms the backbone of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In turn, the LeT provides the TTP with extensive safe havens, through its huge support base in southern Punjab and Lahore. The proximity of these two places to India implies additional avenues of infiltration both for the LeT and neo-Taliban cadres to carry out expeditionary Mumbai 26/11-style attacks. Of further concern to India is a UN report released on 15 April 2010, which has confirmed that Ilyas Kashmiri has strong links with Al Qaeda second-in-command, Ayman al Zawahiri.³⁰

LeT in the US: According to Sebastian Rotella of the *Los Angeles Times*,

Lashkar has actively recruited Westerners, especially Britons and Americans, serving as a kind of farm team for Islamic militants.³¹

Stephen Tankel believes that the LeT has made its bases inside Pakistan, including FATA and NWFP, available to English-speaking *jihadis* for training. This is going to be the single largest threat for the import of terrorist attacks inside the US.

The largest US-based terror cell was the "Virginia Paintball Jihad," in which 12 people were indicted (US Muslim citizens, trained in LeT camps in Pakistan). The other prominent cell to be broken was the "Georgia Jihad" – plotters from the US (trained in LeT camps in Pakistan), who intended to target Capitol Hill, and the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington D.C.

David Coleman Headley was a US citizen who plotted Mumbai 26/11 and the abortive plot to attack the Danish newspaper (which published the controversial illustrations of Prophet Mohammed) in a project called, "Mickey Mouse". Headley represents the sophisticated, urban recruit, who moves freely in American society

The LeT threat was summed up by federal prosecutor Paul McNulty,³² while discussing the case of 11 men who travelled to Pakistan to train with the LeT – “Right here, in this community, 10 miles from Capitol Hill, in the streets of Northern Virginia, American citizens, allegedly met and plotted and recruited for violent *jihad*.”

Financial Support

There is no dearth of finances for the LeT. It receives generous donations from Saudi Arabian non-governmental organisations (NGOs),³³ charity organisations, businessmen, the Muslim diaspora in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait.

Idara Khidmat-e-Khalq (IKK) is a charity organisation which has become the main conduit for the group's fund collections after the October 2005 earthquake in POK. IKK's relief and rehabilitation work after the quake firmly established it and the LeT in POK and other areas for social work. The IKK has since become a hub of fund collection from the UK and the US. British authorities discovered that the group had collected money from the Pakistani diaspora in London, Birmingham and Manchester.³⁴

Other sources include:

- Hides of slaughtered animals (approximately 1.2 million are sacrificed annually during Eid).
- *Hawala* transactions through the D-Company syndicate, as reported by Faizal Sheikh, arrested by the Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) in July 2006.³⁵
- Online fund-raisers through Saudi Arabian *Wahhabis*.³⁶
- Cells operating across the globe.
- Unconfirmed reports of heroin smuggling from Afghanistan through Pakistan seaports, from which the D-Company shares some of the spoils with the LeT.
- The fake Indian currency network is another source of funding for the LeT.
- Siphoning off of US aid to Pakistan (so far, more than \$1 billion for counter-terrorism operations) by the ISI to LeT *jihadists*.
- Britain's Pakistani population: With a population of 4,80,000, they constitute the second largest segment of donors worldwide, amounting in the millions of pounds.³⁷

Operations

In the Indian Hinterland

The LeT's first operation outside J&K was the *fidayeen* attack on the Red Fort in New Delhi, in December 2000. The Red Fort was a symbolic target and in consonance with the outfit's stated goal of planting the Islamic flag on the Red Fort, once the capital of Mughal rule in India. Since then, the LeT has carried out well-calibrated and high-value attacks on many major Indian cities and targets. This marks a shift in its objectives from limiting the *jihad* only to J&K and assumes the dimensions of international terrorism. The degree of support and effort required to widen its scope of operations to a pan-Indian scale brings it in contact with global radical Islamic terror outfits, as also criminal and fundamentalist organisations within India. It highlights the larger goal of the LeT and its masters to destabilise India and keep it perpetually under siege.

Major Terrorist Operations in the Indian Hinterland

Place	Date	Attack on	SF Killed	SF Injured	Civilian Killed	Civilian Injured
Red Fort, New Delhi	December 2000	Army Camp	03			
Parliament, New Delhi	13 December 2001	Parliament	09			
New Delhi	29 October 2005	Sarojini Nagar and Paharganj markets			70	
Bangalore	December 2005	Indian Institute of Science (IISc)				
Varanasi	07 March 2006	Sankat Mochan Mandir, railway station			20	
Nagpur	June 2006	Foiled <i>fidayeen</i> attack on RSS HQ				
Mumbai	11 July 2006	Multiple bomb attacks on commuter trains			216	
Mumbai	26 November 2008	Multiple targets			166	

Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal

Selection of Targets and Modus Operandi

Since 1999, the group has utilised small but heavily armed and highly motivated, two- to four-man squads, operating independently or in combination with others, on suicidal – but not suicide – missions, that are intended to inflict the largest number of casualties during attacks on politically significant or strategically symbolic sites. These missions invariably are complex and entail detailed tactical planning; historically, they have taken the form of surprise raids aimed at heavily guarded facilities such as Indian military installations (Kaluchak in 2002), command headquarters (Srinagar), political institutions (Indian Parliament), or iconic buildings (Taj Hotel, Mumbai), all intended to inflict the highest level of pain, underscore the vulnerability of the Indian state and embarrass the Indian government...In any event, the LeT personnel involved in the majority of these attacks seek to escape the scene whenever possible – in fact, they come carefully prepared to endure yet exfiltrate – but appear quite willing to sacrifice themselves if necessary, if in the process they can take down a larger number of bystanders, hostages, and security forces.³⁸

These attacks have generally been on major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Varanasi, with politico-economic significance as also the presence of a significant number of local sleeper cells. They have targeted public and crowded places, transportation systems, markets, places of worships, hotels, hospitals and other public institutions. Using sophisticated weapons, hand grenades, and explosive devices, these highly trained operatives have killed indiscriminately in suicidal but not suicide attacks, drawing intense media attention (giving further fillip to their motivation levels). The simultaneity of the attacks have taken responders invariably by surprise.

An analysis of attacks carried out by the LeT outside the state of J&K since 2000 reveals the utilisation of some Indian citizens in target scouting and providing logistical support to the actual attackers or bombers, who were all Pakistani citizens. These facilitators, in the earlier attacks on the Red Fort and Parliament, had a Kashmir link, a connection easier for the LeT to utilise, owing to the scale of its involvement in the state. However, since the multiple serial blasts of September 2005 in Delhi, this line began to blur, with suspected and established evidence of the Indian youth of these areas

being involved in facilitating the attacks. Although a Kashmiri paramedical representative was arrested in the Delhi bombings case, subsequent arrests of Indian Mujahideen (IM) men following the serial blasts in 2008 have put their role under the scanner in the Delhi blasts (2005), and Mumbai train bombings (2006) as well. A line of investigation indicates that some of these Indian men may even have planted the bombs that went off. The bombs that went off at the Gateway of India and Zaveri Bazaar in Mumbai on 25 August 2003 were planted by a Mumbai-based couple at the behest of the LeT, who established links with them through contacts in the Gulf. They were brainwashed to avenge the post-Godhra riots of 2002.

LeT and IM: The arrest of Sarfaraz Nawaz, an IM operative, led to the information that the 2008 Bangalore bombings were carried out under the direct command of the LeT. The arrest of Ali Abdul Hooti, a Muscat entrepreneur, by the Oman Police in 2009, revealed the deep nexus and co-ordination between the LeT and IM. Ali Abdul Hooti was a key LeT financier and facilitator, who was supporting IM operations in south India through Sarfaraz Nawaz. Ali Hooti had even visited Mumbai on 10 and 17 November 2008, and arranged safe passage for Fahim Ansari, an LeT operative, from Dubai to Pakistan, en route to Mumbai. Fahim Ansari, incidentally, was tried on charges of having generated the video tape surveillance of the Mumbai 26/11 targets.³⁹

Home-grown LeT: Mohammad Umer Madani, an LeT operative arrested by the Delhi Police on 06 June 2009,⁴⁰ has revealed that he had raised substantial funds from Saudi Arabia over the past decade. He disclosed the names of 12 persons whom he had recruited in the past five years; two from Bihar and 10 from Nepal. Madani was running *madrasas* on the Indo-Nepal border and collected money from Saudi Arabian sources, in the name of sustaining these *madrasas*.

The LeT has made deep inroads, spreading its network in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Tripura. Mohammad Safikul, an LeT operative arrested in Malda by Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officers on 13 January 2009⁴¹ has revealed the names of people he had recruited for the LeT in West Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Tripura. Sleuths believe that Safikul had supplied RDX and other explosives during the Mumbai 26/11 carnage. Nine pre-activated SIM cards, fake Indian currency worth Rs

50,000 and a forged voter ID card were seized from Safikul. Fahim Ansari and Sabauddin, Indian LeT operatives arrested in December 2008 for an attack on a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in January 2008, have revealed the deep nexus between the Indian and Pakistani arms of the LeT, and the local help that the LeT got for Mumbai 26/11.⁴² The Mumbai Police took custody of these individuals in December 2008.

Kerala has emerged as an important base for the LeT. There are reports of *jlhadi* training camps in Kannur and Ernakulam. The questioning of Sarfaraz Nawaz of the IM has revealed that he received orders directly from the LeT for the 2008 Bangalore bombing. He has stated that Nazeer of the IM (from Kannur in Kerala), is the point man for the LeT for its south India operations. As per Nawaz, the LeT network in south India is extremely well-organised, enabling it to evade the security agencies and collect funds to carry out its nefarious designs.⁴³

The killing of five men from Kerala in separate encounters with the Indian Army in the Lolab Valley of north Kashmir (October 2008) also confirms the serious effort being made by the LeT in training Indian men for *jlhadi* in Kashmir and all over India. With the arrest of Nazeer on the Indo-Bangladesh border in November 2009, the symbiosis of the IM and LeT is established even more clearly. Nazeer is believed to be the LeT's south India head of operations and the mastermind of the Bangalore serial blasts (25 July 2008). His interrogation has revealed prospective LeT plots in south India and its linkages with the IM and some politicians in Kerala to further its objectives. The large diaspora from Kerala present in the Gulf countries makes it easier for the LeT to indoctrinate and recruit them in *jlhadi* against India. The recent trend of job losses in these countries makes them vulnerable targets for the LeT and ISI spotters. Also, the presence of a substantial Muslim population (Muslim Fundamentalist Organisations [MFOs]) there provided the LeT with fertile ground to establish sleeper cells) in the coastal districts of the state, makes it easier for the LeT to mingle and carry out its activities from Pakistan via the sea route.

Other Activities: Besides cultivating sleeper cells and carrying out recruitment of the Indian youth, the LeT is indirectly involved in smuggling of fake Indian currency notes (FICN) mainly through Nepal and Bangladesh, and is attempting to build sources of funding through *madrasas*, by gaining influence through the IM/SIMI and other MFOs in India.

In Jammu and Kashmir

The LeT first appeared on the Kashmir scene on 05 February 1993, when 12 LeT and Islami Inquilabi Mahaz (an outfit then operating in Poonch) men infiltrated and attacked the battalion headquarters of 11 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry at Balnoi in the Mendhar sector of Poonch, killing two soldiers. Three LeT cadres were also killed in the attack. Since then, the LeT has been responsible for numerous attacks on the security forces and the massacre of minority communities in Jammu and Kashmir. By 1997, the LeT's activities shifted to the Rajouri-Poonch and Doda belts of Jammu division. Several massacres of Hindus were committed by the foreign mercenaries of the LeT and militancy was firmly entrenched in the Jammu division. Post Kargil, it was the LeT which initiated a new phase of *fidayeen* or suicide attacks in the Kashmir Valley, with the attack on a Border Security Force (BSF) sector headquarter in Bandipore.

By now, the LeT has emerged as the most lethal terrorist outfit in J&K, taking on the security forces directly in numerous sneak attacks on the SF camps, ambushes and offering fierce resistance in encounters. The fear and awe of the LeT among the locals naturally grew and they offered its cadres support and shelter. Gradually, however, the local populace grew fed up with the predominantly Pakistani and foreign cadres of the LeT, who committed horrific atrocities against women and on suspected informers. Their contempt for indigenous Kashmiri militants and the marginalisation of the same within the group further alienated them from the people. The *fidayeen* attacks started taking a toll on innocent civilians, and soon, the LeT was despised and feared by the people, who avoided giving its men shelter, lest they put their own lives at risk. Today, with the security forces gaining the upper hand and the gradual elimination of a large number of its cadres, the LeT has been forced to operate in tandem with the HM, Al-Badr and HuJI. Its strength has come down considerably in J&K and its cadres cautiously avoid frequent movements into villages, moving in small groups, if at all.

Pattern of Infiltration: LeT cadres usually infiltrate independently from known launch pads in POK/Pakistan. Due to a majority of its attempts being interdicted by the Army between the Line of Control (LoC) and the border fencing, it has changed its tactics. The use of human guides has given way

to greater reliance on global positioning system (GPS) devices and satellite phones (Thurayya sets). An infiltrating column is well armed with AK-47/56 rifles with at least 2-3 magazines each and enough rounds of 7.62 AK ammunition. In a group of 2-4 militants, one AK rifle is generally equipped with an under-barrel grenade launcher (UBGL). Each terrorist is equipped with hand grenades, ammunition pouch, rucksack, camouflage jackets, and, on some occasions, even mobile phones and some Indian currency. Earlier, militants, while infiltrating, were provided minimum munitions, which were supplemented once they reached their operating station in the hinterland. This indicates a shortage of ammunition now within J&K.

Once groups of militants reach the launch pads, the launch pad commanders identify viable routes of infiltration and send reconnaissance parties of one or two militants or guides. If they return without being fired upon, within a day or two, an infiltrating column is sent on that route, mostly at night or during the wee hours of dawn. The training of LeT militants has improved qualitatively and they undertake LoC crossings under snow and bad weather conditions through treacherous routes more often nowadays. This was observed in March 2009 when large groups (15-50) of LeT and HM militants attempted infiltration via the snow covered passes in the Keran and Gurez sectors, along with huge quantities of munitions. If a large group of six or more militants is detected, one or two militants engage the Army while the rest attempt a diversion to infiltrate. Some such attempts have proved successful as in June and August 2008, and in March 2009, in the Keran, Machal and Gurez sectors, where groups of 15-25 LeT terrorists infiltrated, and upon being detected, split into two or more groups, while a pair of militants kept the troops engaged with tactical fire from behind boulders. The militants have also identified gaps in troop deployment on the LoC and infiltrate via the inter-linking boundaries between battalions and brigades. In the first week of August 2009, multiple attempts were made in a single brigade sector in the Kupwara sector of north Kashmir. While some sneaked in, many were eliminated. Once surrounded by troops, directions are communicated by handlers to inflict maximum casualties on the troops, if unable to infiltrate further. For instance, a group of terrorists in the Keran sector split into pairs in the forests between the LoC and the fence, and intermittently engaged the troops for a week, inflicting casualties whenever they closed in on them.

In instances of a large group or an important leader being infiltrated, local launch commanders are directed to provide a reception party at the LoC and guide the group to its destination in the hinterland. This led to the high casualties inflicted on a special forces team inside Hafruda in March 2009, where the number of infiltrating terrorists was swelled by the reception party, later joined by terrorists already present there.

The LeT's preferred routes of infiltration remain the Tangdhar, Keran and Machal sectors in Kupwara district (north Kashmir). Its major launch pads are concentrated around Bugina, Athmuqam, Dudhnial and Kel opposite this sector. Some special training in snow warfare and para-sailing was imparted to its cadres around these camps in Muzaffarabad and Neelam districts. Top LeT commanders and its major communication nodes are also concentrated here. It has reduced its attempts via Rajouri and Poonch, owing to greater chances of detection and reduced cadre strength there.

Dispersal of Funds: The outfit has established a well-oiled overground network for the disbursal of funds to its cadres. Apart from its armed cadres carrying hard currency from across the LoC, increasingly other means, such as Western Union money transfers, *hawala* channels and the use of women couriers, have been detected.

E-transfer of Funds: With the arrival of ATMs and other modern forms of banking in the Valley, especially in Srinagar, money can be diverted to LeT commanders through the bank accounts of its overground workers (OGWs) and sympathisers, who are often businessmen and travel frequently between Kashmir and the rest of the country and even across the world. Money can be transferred to their accounts from London, Dubai or anywhere else in the world. Then, couriers physically transfer the hard currency via a number of intermediaries.

Hawala Channels: This continues to be a preferred mode of fund transfer. Recently, with the arrest of a Srinagar-based businessman, the J&K Police stumbled upon a network of Punjab and J&K-based businessmen delivering funds to LeT cadres by using the trade channels established at Kaman (Uri) and Chakan-da-Bagh (Poonch). Mushtaq, a Budgam-based trader, had a shop in a plush Srinagar locality, which often remained shut. Upon searching it, grenades were found there. A Jammu-based businessman and a Kashmiri trader from Kulgam set up companies which would receive goods from

across the LoC via Kaman and Chakan-da-Bagh. These goods were sent to two Amritsar-based businessmen, who would send the cash to Mushtaq, who would then funnel it to the militants. The Amritsar-based businessmen received up to 40 percent commission for such transactions. Mushtaq was caught handing over cash to an OGW in Banihal, after which the police stumbled upon this network. Several such networks in J&K support LeT activities, but this was the first time that traders from outside the state were found to be involved in such funding.

Use of Women Couriers: This method is of late being increasingly utilised by militants in J&K, especially the LeT. Due to the absence of frisking and suspicion of women, the militants think of it as a successful venture. Several arrests of women carrying munitions, SIM cards and funds to the militants have been made.

OGW Network: A well-oiled mechanism of overground workers is aiding and abetting LeT activity in the state. A new dimension to this was observed in the recent agitations over the Amarnath land row and Shopian incidents, where militants, unable to strike, were directing their OGWs and local religious leaders in organising anti-India demonstrations. Communications of LeT commanders were intercepted directing their sympathisers to mobilise people in major Valley towns. This period of chaos during which anti-militancy operations were suspended was then utilised by the militants to regroup. LeT activity in the Shopian district increased, following the agitations in June 2010. The current stone pelting phenomenon has its roots in the Amarnath land row and Shopian incidents, when exploiting the low security forces' footprints in population centres, the OGW mechanism firmed in and since, has become a structured organisation.

Mohd Aslam, a resident of Rajouri and a post-graduate student from Lucknow Univeristy, was arrested on 25 August 2009 with five kgs of RDX concealed in a box of sweets purchased from Jammu. Police say he was attempting to board the Sachkhand Express for Nanded (Maharashtra). With this arrest, the OGW network in J&K being utilised by the LeT to carry out its pan-India activities has once again come to the fore. At least 21 boys from the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, who pursued higher studies in Arabic, Persian and Urdu from Lucknow University, and others who studied at *madrasas* in Gujarat are under the police scanner for their

suspected links with the LeT. Though not all Kashmiris studying outside the state are suspects, some of them with previous links to militancy are often coopted by handlers in Pakistan to aid their activities in India.

Present State of Activity: Over the years, the cadre strength of the LeT within J&K has dwindled, due to the concerted elimination of its cadres, including top commanders, by the security forces and interdiction of a majority of infiltration attempts. As Pakistan finds itself embroiled in conflict with a host of militant outfits on its own soil and due to continuous international pressure, it has tended to focus less on Kashmir and attempted to stem the flow of *jihadis* into J&K. Post 26/11, it has asked the LeT to lie low and even curtailed funding to the outfit.

A perceptible shift in the LeT's strategy has been restricting the use of *fidayeen* or suicide squads. This was the deadliest LeT trademark and had created the maximum impact on the security forces. The LeT had lost a large number of its cadres in *fidayeen* attacks from 1999-2007. The frequency of these attacks started coming down from 2004 onwards. Barring the two attacks in Jammu (May and August 2008), there has been no such attack in the state in recent times. The *fidayeen* strategy, hence, proved costly to the outfit and it has since attempted to preserve its cadres. The lull was, however, broken on 06 January 2010, when two *fidayeens* loosely affiliated with both the LeT and HuM, carried out a strike at Lal Chowk, Srinagar. Subsequent communication intercepts have revealed the need to bring back *fidayeen* attacks to stem the downward spiral of militancy in J&K and bring back focus on it.

The recruitment of Kashmiri youth into the LeT continues to be low. However, there have been a few instances of men being lured and provided training within J&K. Post the Amarnath land row agitations and subsequent anti-India protests, attempts were made by the LeT to win recruits to its side. In fact, one of the Kashmiri militants killed in the Lal Chowk *fidayeen* attack is reported to have joined the LeT after participating in the "Muzaffarabad Chalo" march in Baramulla (August 2008). He was agitated with the perceived police highhandedness in opening fire to quell the demonstrations. Recently, eight Kashmiri boys from south Kashmir were apprehended in Srinagar while on their way to Kupwara in an attempt to crossover to POK for arms training. They were being coopted by the HM for the LeT. There have been

reports indicating increased cadre strength following successful infiltration attempts in the forest belts of Rajwar-Hafruda and the Lolab Valley of north Kashmir. The LeT is making similar efforts to regain lost ground in the Pir Panjal region of Surankot.

Unable to strike singularly, the LeT has increased its cooperation with other outfits, especially the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. At a recent meeting, the ISI had brought together their cadres and made them infiltrate in mixed batches. In the hinterland, they have been asked to form small teams of four militants consisting of at least one Kashmiri HM militant. The HM would provide logistical support while the LeT members would carry out low profile strikes. There is evidence of such teams having been launched into action since August 2010, with repeated strikes in Srinagar and Sopore on policemen and CRPF personnel deployed in market places. The militants open fire with silencer-fitted weapons and melt away, aided by local support and direction provided by HM modules. There has been a spurt in the targeting of civilians, including women, and suspected security force informers in Pulwama and Shopian districts of south Kashmir. A group of foreign militants is believed to be behind these killings, aided by the HM, which traditionally had a strong base in south Kashmir.

By and large, the LeT remains unpopular with the local population in the state, due to its predominant Pakistani and foreign cadre profile, and their abhorrence of the Kashmiri youth.

Recommendations

The support provided by the LeT's sleeper agents to the outfit's attack in Mumbai on 26/11 displayed the potency the outfit has achieved by cultivating sleeper cells and luring Indian youth (by way of the IM) into its fold. With the continued support and expansion of such cells in India, the LeT fighting core in Pakistan continues to plan new attacks on India. The interrogation of David Coleman Headley in Chicago by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has reaffirmed this fact. Headley himself is believed to have surveyed 30 of the 100 fresh LeT targets in India since 26/11. With the war against Islamic fundamentalism reaching its tipping point in the Af-Pak region, more deadly attacks could be planned on India in an attempt to create a diversion. Mounting American pressure on the Pakistan Army to launch an offensive

in North Waziristan, which would mean taking on elements affiliated to the Afghan Taliban, could signal another Mumbai-type attack being contemplated by the Pakistan Army-ISI-LeT combine. There is also the fear of the LeT acting independently as the war against terrorism in Pakistan has taken a severe toll on the ISI's and the Pakistan Army's hold over its own terror outfits. For now, the LeT continues to be among the very few outfits under Pakistan's control, but independent action could be taken by some of its important leaders or factions, which have been swayed by Al Qaeda's ideology and with embedded relations with the same. The LeT is now active in at least 10 provinces in Afghanistan and attacks on Indian targets in Afghanistan post 26/11 indicate the deep resentment in the Pakistani establishment of growing Indian involvement in Afghanistan.

It is apparent that a recce of widespread localities in India is being carried out with the active support of a large number of sleeper cells within India. In addition to hardening up of government and military installations, a multi-pronged intelligence grid needs to be maintained at all times to prevent attacks from taking place. In the present strategic scenario in the Af-Pak region, Pakistan may also attempt to mount skirmishes along the LoC in J&K. In addition to cross-border firing, *fidayeen* or border action teams (BAT) of the LeT and Ilyas Kashmiri's IOI battalion may attack isolated posts along the LoC and International Boundary (IB) sectors in J&K.

Social, Political and Diplomatic Efforts

The 'Root Cause' Argument: The LeT's predominantly Pakistani cadres operate fixed tenures in J&K and have no love or sympathy for the cause or the 'issue of Kashmir'. Foreign terrorists cannot be expected to fight for the genuine grievances of a population of another country. Their only aim is to spread terror and intimidate the populace. This factor should be exploited by Kashmiri politicians, religious leaders and other prominent civil society members to turn the 'root cause' argument on its head. Diplomatically, this argument can be used to deny the LeT the status of 'freedom fighters' in J&K.

Greater International Cooperation: India has been regularly sharing details of the LeT infrastructure in Pakistan. In the aftermath of the global outrage following 26/11, such data and information about the LeT's activities in Pakistan should be gathered and shared on a real-time basis between

international intelligence agencies. Evidence of increased activity can be shared with Pakistan to nip in the bud any strike in the offing.

Monitoring US aid to Pakistan: The US must press Pakistan to allow greater media reporting from FATA and KP to oversee the utilisation of US aid for counter-terrorism efforts. The current aid bill requires an assessment to be made to the US Congress on steps Pakistan has taken in the areas of closing the terrorist camps of the JuD and LeT, and oversight over the educational curriculum in *madrastas*.

The LeT Reservoir in Pakistan: The LeT draws most of its recruits from the poverty-stricken belts of Punjab (Pakistan). The prevalence of a feudal agricultural set-up and the absence of industry, along with the indifference of the elitist class towards land reforms, has contributed to a large number of jobless and illiterate youth getting attracted towards religious seminaries run by the LeT's affiliate organisations such as the JuD. India has very little leverage to address this 'root cause' of terrorism directed against itself from Pakistan, but it could create more knowledge and publicity worldwide on this factor and pressurise Pakistan to focus more on development in Punjab. This point can gain influence by greater people-to-people interaction between the people of India and Pakistan, and awareness about development, land reforms and education on India's side. This matter can also be disseminated in Track II dialogues between the two countries.

Greater International Pressure: Owing to widespread global outrage following the Parliament and Mumbai 26/11 attacks, the international community came together and proscribed the LeT and JuD. A concerted diplomatic pressure and information campaign about the LeT's activities in Pakistan and worldwide needs to be maintained by the External Affairs Ministry and Indian missions abroad. Greater cooperation with the US and countries having leverage with Pakistan such as the Gulf countries needs to be maintained, to apprise them of the LeT's activities and the Pakistan state's complicity in nurturing it.

Religious and OGW Propoganda: The Muslim population in India has largely kept away from the sway of virulent Islam propagated in Pakistan. Community leaders have a greater role in preventing the Indian youth from falling into the trap of the LeT and other organisations, by restraining attempts at the misinterpretation of Islam and radicalisation of the discourse of Islam in India.

The elected representatives of the people should play a more active part in countering the propaganda of separatist parties like the Hurriyat and that of the OGW networks of militant outfits. They should maintain a continuous and active contact with the people at the ground level and address their day-to-day problems. In the case of an encounter taking place in their constituency, they should carry out an on-the-spot assessment of the site and counter the propaganda of the terrorists and separatists, of the encounter being a 'fake' one or that civilians were killed in cold blood by the security forces. They should prevent the local villagers from being swayed by separatist sentiments following such encounters.

Operational Efforts

Monitoring the Terror Infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK: There is an urgent need for the procurement of sophisticated surveillance equipment to identify and constantly monitor LeT assets across the border. Satellite coverage in areas having significant presence of LeT training camps and launch pads should be enhanced. Internationally, countries such as the US could share signals and other technical intelligence of LeT operatives in Pakistan and other countries with India. At the tactical level in J&K, increased dependence on electronic measures has borne fruit in interdicting infiltration attempts and locating terrorist hideouts.

Developing HUMINT Capabilities: The Government of India should increase clandestine intelligence-gathering activities in Pakistan. A dedicated cell focusing exclusively on the LeT should be created in the R&AW and the Intelligence Bureau. The government should increase intelligence funding and provide those institutions with more manpower and technical capabilities to focus exclusively on terror groups and their leadership. Gradually, covert targeting capabilities of their top leadership in Pakistan and PoK could be developed. It is high time India took the war to the enemy's doorstep. Within the country, these dedicated cells could deploy their maximum assets and time in monitoring the activities of the LeT and keep tabs on their contacts in India and neighbouring countries, especially Nepal and Bangladesh. Such cells could maintain a dedicated electronic database on top- and middle-rung LeT operatives with their updated profiles, activities and locations. Their continuous tracking would help in intercepting many plots and they

could even be eliminated in Mossad-style covert operations, pending the development of such capabilities.

Breaking LeT's Domestic Links in India: The LeT's linkages with groups such as the IM/Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), criminal elements in the Indo-Nepal belt, fundamentalist organisations in south India and the underworld in Mumbai need to be broken. Increasingly, the number of moles in these outfits will bear results. These groups provide the base for the LeT to carry out activities in the Indian hinterland. A better state of education, employment generation and delinking of politics from religion and vote banks in certain vulnerable belts of Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, and Gujarat will negate the terror groups' influence over the youth from these regions and elsewhere.

Greater Technical Surveillance and Security Measures: The Government of India claims that banning of pre-paid SIM cards in J&K has led to a reduction of terrorist activity in the state. However, many more steps need to be taken in this domain. There is a need to create technical monitoring stations countrywide to monitor cell phone and internet traffic. The National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) was created to serve this purpose but there is a need for inter-agency monitoring units at the state level. Police, intelligence, cell phone and internet service providers should jointly evolve a mechanism to identify and monitor suspicious chatter and prevent the purchase of SIM cards in fake names. The government has also prohibited the use of cheap Chinese mobile handsets in India which could not be traced. Illegal shipment of such devices and proliferation of foreign cell phone transmissions in the border areas need to be monitored.

Targeting the Terror Infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK: In the event of another grave provocation such as 26/11, the Indian armed forces have evolved specific response scenarios targeting assets of groups such as the LeT across the border. The location, activities and movement of LeT cadres and their leadership should be constantly monitored to be able to effectively retaliate, following an attack. The liquidation of the LeT's infrastructure in PoK will not put an end to its activities but will at least temporarily negate its strike capabilities. A bombing raid on Muridke would be symbolic and deter the outfit from planning further attacks on India.

The Lashkar-e-Tayyeba poses the maximum threat to symbols of a rising India, such as sensitive defence and political installations, economic and political targets. Therefore, there is an ever increasing need to shore up the physical defence of such infrastructure across the country. In the aftermath of the Mumbai 26/11 attacks, India has taken several measures to strengthen the apparatus of internal security by strengthening anti-terror laws, revamping intelligence agencies, strengthening and creating anti-terror police forces, coastal security and other institutional reforms. Yet, the widespread number of sensitive assets requires private firms, in addition to the government, to purchase modern security equipment and train its own security personnel to protect their respective assets. There should be greater police/intelligence and industry cooperation at the local level. On the other hand, the government should expedite the purchase of modern equipment, munitions and armoury for the armed forces, police and paramilitary, to combat terrorism.

Conclusion

The Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, with its well oiled and elaborate network in Pakistan, poses a latent threat to India. Post 26/11 and afflicted with the domestic climate within Pakistan, the outfit has gelled closer with Al Qaeda and poses a threat to the United States and other Western nations. Recent plots such as the ones to target Denmark and Western embassies in Bangladesh reveal this design. This reality has resonated with the United States establishment and its intelligence agencies are now keeping a close eye on the LeT's activities worldwide and in Pakistan. This could be a great opportunity for both India and the US to combine their resources in combating the LeT.

Domestically, there is a need for Indian intelligence and police agencies to revamp their functioning to break the syndicate which the LeT is building with outfits such as the Indian Mujahideen, criminal and underworld groups, especially in Mumbai and the Indo-Nepal border belts, and fundamentalist organisations in Kerala. Utilising the assets of the ISI and affiliate groups such as the HuJI in Nepal and Bangladesh, the LeT constantly keeps India within its striking capability. With porous land borders and the availability of sleeper cells in India, the LeT could launch strikes with ease. A constant identification

and surveillance of such cells has to be maintained round the clock by the agencies concerned. Security agencies, therefore, need to be on constant alert and a year-round vigil of sensitive installations needs to be maintained. Post 26/11, sharing of intelligence between agencies has increased but the ability to act decisively on such inputs needs to be further fine-tuned. Recent arrests and intelligence inputs have ominously confirmed the LeT's continuing designs against India, with a majority of its targets being defence and sensitive installations across the country.

In J&K, the LeT has shown signs of revival, though the situation is well under control. However, it would require only one good infiltration season for the LeT to revamp its activities. If this happens, the Indian Army should be allowed to retaliate effectively to Pakistani ceasefire violations, to which they are increasingly resorting to facilitate infiltration, in the absence of any other means, via the traditional routes along the LoC/IB.

Finally, the LeT would continue to be the Pakistan Army's key instrument against India in order to keep the Indian Army tied down in J&K. Effective operations and domination in J&K and the Indian hinterland would help in curtailing the outfits' activities but it requires only one Mumbai 26/11-type incident to ramp up tensions and vitiate the atmosphere of peace and security. In the event of another such eventuality, the Indian armed forces should be allowed to obliterate a substantial number of identifiable LeT assets in Pakistan and POK, so that a dent is created in its capability for future occasions. The argument that surgical and covert strikes would not completely eliminate the threat holds water, but it would serve the objective of bringing India some respite, as also as a warning to the LeT that its actions would not go unchecked.

Major Terrorist Attacks in J&K since 1993

Date	Place	Incident
05 February 1993	Balnoi, Poonch	Two soldiers, three LeT militants killed in attack on a battalion HQ.
05 January 1996	Barshalla, Doda	16 Hindus massacred by LeT militants.
25-26 January 1997	Sumber, Doda and Wundhama, Ganderbal	17 Hindus and 25 Kashmiri Pandits massacred in Sumber, Doda and in Wundhama village near Srinagar, respectively.
18 April 1998	Prankote, Doda	27 Hindus massacred.
19 June 1998	Chapnari, Doda	25 Hindus massacred.
08 August 1998	Chamba, Himachal Pradesh	35 labourers massacred by foreign mercenaries close to the J&K-Himachal Pradesh border in Chamba district.
19 July 1999	Layata, Doda	15 Hindus killed.
20 March 2000	Chittisinghpura, Anantnag	35 Sikh villagers massacred by LeT and HM militants posing as Army soldiers.
01-02 August 2000	Kupwara, Anantnag and Doda districts	83 civilians killed in separate attacks in three districts by LeT militants.
10 August 2000	Residency road, Srinagar	A car bomb detonated at a busy market place killed 12 policemen and two civilians. The blast was carried out on the eve of the central government's talks with the HM.
02 March 2001	Morha Chatru, Rajouri	15 security forces personnel and two civilians killed and nine injured in an ambush jointly carried out by the LeT, HM, JeM and Hel.
13 July 2002	Jammu	31 labourers killed by two terrorists in Rajiv Nagar and Kasimpura.
23 August 2002	Rajouri district	10 civilians massacred in two separate incidents at Thanamandi and Manjakote.
16 November 2005	Srinagar	Four persons killed and 72 injured in a car bomb explosion in uptown Srinagar.
11 July 2006	Srinagar	Eight persons killed and 43 injured in a series of grenade explosions in Srinagar city.
15 June 2007	Sopore	Two persons killed and nine injured in firing by terrorists at Iqbal Market.
19 September 2007	Sonamarg	Three soldiers killed when an Army convoy is ambushed on the Srinagar-Kargil highway.

Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal

Fidayeen Attacks by the LeT

Date	Place	Incident
03 November 1999	Badami Bagh Cantoment, Srinagar	Two LeT <i>fidayeen</i> , including its Srinagar district commander, first fire upon a SF vehicle and then enter the office of the 15 Corps PRO, killing Major Purushottam. The entrenched terrorists later killed eight others, before being eliminated.
27 December 1999	Special Operations Group (SOG) Headquarters, Srinagar	Two terrorists attack the SOG HQ, killing 12 policemen before being eliminated.
16 January 2001	Srinagar airport	Six LeT <i>fidayeen</i> killed four security force personnel and two civilians, in an attempt to storm the Srinagar airport. All six terrorists were eliminated.
09 February 2001	Batmaloo, Srinagar	Four terrorists attack the Police Control Room in Batmaloo, killing eight policemen. All four terrorists were killed in the encounter.
08 January 2002	Trehgam, Kupwara	Two <i>fidayeen</i> s and one soldier killed in an attack on an Army Brigade HQ.
20 March 2002	Jammu	Two terrorists fired indiscriminately at the Raghunath and Panjbakhtar temples, killing 11 and injuring 30 people. One terrorist blew himself up while the other was shot down.
14 May 2002	Kaluchak, Jammu	Three LeT terrorists storm Army quarters in the outskirts of Jammu, killing 31 family members of Army men deployed on the borders.
08 October 2002	Doda	Two security force personnel killed in an attack on the Town Hall polling station
22 November 2002	Srinagar	Six CRPF personnel and two terrorists killed in an attack on a CRPF camp.
01 December 2002	Doda	Two Army soldiers, one civilian and two terrorists killed in a <i>fidayeen</i> attack on an army patrol.

19 December 2002	Rajouri	One soldier and one terrorist killed in a <i>fidayeen</i> attack on an Army post in Khablan.
22 July 2003	Akhnoor, Jammu	A three-member suicide squad storm an Army camp at Tanda on the Jammu-Akhnoor road, killing eight soldiers including a Brigadier, and injuring 12 others.
07 January 2005	Srinagar	Three security force personnel and one terrorist killed in a suicide attack on the offices of the Income Tax Department.
15 November 2005	Srinagar	Two persons killed and 17 injured in a <i>fidayeen</i> attack at Lal Chowk. One terrorist is killed while another is nabbed.
26 March 2006	Pampore, Srinagar	One terrorist and one soldier killed in an attack on an Army convoy on the outskirts of Srinagar.
21 May 2006	Srinagar	Three political activists and two police personnel killed and 25 injured in firing at a political gathering. The two terrorists are subsequently killed in the encounter.
01 June 2007	Baramulla	Two soldiers and two terrorists killed and 16 others injured in an attack on an Army convoy at Sheeri in Baramulla town.
26 July 2007	Srinagar	One terrorist killed in an abortive suicide strike on the premises of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) at Zakura.
11-12 October 2007	Srinagar	Two suicide bombers killed and three CRPF jawans injured in an attempted attack on a CRPF camp near Dal Lake.
08 November 2007	Sopore	Two terrorists and one CRPF jawan killed in a three-day long encounter, following an abortive bid by terrorists to storm a CRPF camp.
11 May 2008	Samba	Four civilians and two Army personnel killed in a <i>fidayeen</i> attack in Samba town. The two LeT terrorists holed-up in a house were also eliminated.

27 August 2008	Chinore, Jammu	Five civilians, three SF personnel and three LeT terrorists killed in a <i>fidayeen</i> attack on the Jammu-Akhnoor road.
06 January 2010	Srinagar	Two persons, including a policeman, killed and seven others injured in a <i>fidayeen</i> attack in Lal Chowk. The two holed-up militants were finally eliminated after a 22-hour long gun battle with the CRPF.

Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal

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