

DECONSTRUCTING AL QAEDA'S TERRORIST NETWORK IN INDIA

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Al Qaeda is characterised by a broad based ideology, a novel structure, a robust capacity for regeneration and a very diverse membership that cuts across ethnic, class and national boundaries. It is neither a single group nor a coalition of groups: it comprises a core base or bases in Afghanistan, satellite terrorist cells worldwide, a conglomerate of Islamist political parties, and other largely independent terrorist groups that it draws on for offensive actions and other responsibilities.¹

INTRODUCTION

The tentacles of terrorism grasp no single state today and all nations have been its victim in some way or the other. Transnational terrorism has developed into a global enemy whose forces are operating over the map, coordinating their move from one point while the execution occurs at another. And this is not facilitated by a single organisation. Instead, terrorist organisations, today, operate in tandem with each other, forming linkages and alliances, which are a result of not just a convergence of ideologies but of pragmatic necessity. Inter-connections amongst terrorist groups form an arrangement that is held together by the flow of information and resources

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1. Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New Delhi: Lotus Collection, 2011) p. 54.

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Interestingly, alliances amongst terrorist groups is a considerably new phenomenon, paired primarily with the rise of Al Qaeda. Although formed in the early 1980s, the group rose to prominence with the infamous 9/11 attacks, which gave it the opportunity to create such a network by linking with other groups, and influencing their functioning in various ways.

Terrorist groups in India too are part of this grid, wherein they are under the suzerainty of Al Qaeda in one manner or the other. Although Al Qaeda has never ventured directly into India², it has acted through its affiliates, that have organised a range of terror strikes in the nation. But this network in India is not necessarily supported by a similarity in ideology. This is because India figures on Al Qaeda's radar mostly due to the prevalence of the Hindu religion among the population. Al Qaeda and the other Islamist terrorist groups often claim that the Muslims in India are oppressed and use this argument to validate their involvement in the region.³ However, almost all its affiliates that operate in the region support the secession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir from India and its annexation into Pakistan. For many of them, establishment of a pan-Islamic rule in India becomes a secondary aim, and is used more as a tool to gather support and seek recruits to fight for their primary aim, which is the breaking away of Kashmir from the Indian state.

The limitation of means is a major problem that these local groups face, and that is why they seek alliances with much more capable groups such as Al Qaeda. Aligning themselves with stronger groups provides not just

2. Some analysts have argued that Al Qaeda has an official arm in India too called Al Qaeda al Hind, however, such reports have not received much backing. See <http://www.sunday-guardian.com/news/al-qaeda-finds-base-in-india-modi-is-on-its-radar>

3. Animesh Roul, "Al Qaeda's Latest Bid to Woo Indian Muslims", ISN, October 17, 2013. See, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?id=170939>

moral support, but also ensures availability of greater resources. In exchange, Al Qaeda is able to exercise its dominance and control over a wider geographical space and gets access to the local workforce and regional resources, mainly in the form of information and, sometimes, money. Thus, the alliance is beneficial to both sides.

As this paper explains, such a network operates at various levels providing for an hierarchical structure, which although not strictly followed, ensures a flow of command. Various groups form this network, including some charity organisations and transnational bodies, and even state organisations. Together, they create a complex mechanism to orchestrate an attack with maximum efficiency.

In the Indian context, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2008, defines a terrorist act as anything “with intent to threaten or likely to threaten the unity, integrity, security or sovereignty of India or with intent to strike terror or likely to strike terror in the people or any section of the people in India or in any foreign country.”

DEFINING TERRORISM

Before the commencement of the study, it is essential to define terrorism, to limit the scope of the paper. Terrorism as a concept is heavily debated and scholars have, over the years, defined it differently. This study concerns itself with the terrorist groups which operate in India, and their association with Al Qaeda. In this regard, terrorism has been defined as per Title 22 of United States Code set up by the United States’ Department of State, which terms terrorism as: “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.”⁴ This code also specifies that international terrorism is “terrorism involving the citizens or territory of more than one country.”⁵

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4. Glossary, US Department of State. See <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/info/c16718.htm>

5. Ibid.

likely to threaten the unity, integrity, security or sovereignty of India or with intent to strike terror or likely to strike terror in the people or any section of the people in India or in any foreign country.”⁶ This Act was further amended in 2012 to include “economic security, including financial, monetary and fiscal stability.”⁷ This amendment was essential because in 2010, India joined the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)⁸, which is an inter-governmental body seeking to fight money-laundering and terrorist financing.

TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

In December 2001, security forces found blueprints in the residence of an Al Qaeda leader in Afghanistan, for attacks to be carried out in Singapore by the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).⁹ This example demonstrates how the terrorist groups are interlinked all over the world, coordinating and executing attacks while providing assistance to one another. In this case, JI contributed manpower, training grounds and safe havens outside the Middle East for Al Qaeda members, while receiving equipment, logistical expertise and training. Such cooperation allowed the JI to execute attacks like the Bali bombings.¹⁰

Similarly, the Mumbai attacks of 2008 were not orchestrated by the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) alone. Although the perpetrators were members of the LeT, the planning of the attack was done in consultation with leaders of Al Qaeda such as Ilyas Kashmiri¹¹, who coordinated with the American (of Pakistani origin) terrorist David Coleman Headley, who had connections with various other terrorist groups in the region. There was also considerable input from state agencies such as Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Directorate for

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6. The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2008, Government of India, at http://mha.nic.in/hindi/sites/upload_files/mhahindi/files/pdf/UAPA-1967.pdf
 7. Ibid.
 8. Annual Report, 2011-12, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, p. 40
 9. Summary of Case Against Jemaah Islamiyah (Singapore), Report, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of Singapore, 2002, p. 1.
 10. Michael C. Horowitz and Philip B. K. Potter, “Allying to Kill: Terrorist Intergroup Cooperation and the Consequences for Lethality”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (California: Sage, 2014), vol. 58, no.2, p. 200
 11. Bruce Riedel, *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America and the Future of Global Jihad* (Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2011), p. 101.

Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).¹² It was months of planning, done by people transcending borders, that made the Mumbai attack possible.

These examples help in understanding the transnational nature of contemporary terrorism. Terrorist groups today do not just operate in the nation where they are located, but are able to function beyond their geographical boundaries. This need not mean that a group is physically present and active in more than one nation. Instead, it refers to the fact that terrorist groups today can carry out attacks whose consequences transverse geographical and political barriers. Even if the attack is localised, the influences are far-reaching. Instead of creating localised fear, terrorist groups today are working to send out a broader message. This is what reflects the transnational nature of modern terrorism.

Al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks marked the beginning of this new face of terrorism. The attack on the World Trade Centre was not just a symbolic destruction of the icon of Western capitalism, but was shocking in the manner in which civilian technology was used to bring about massive destruction. The environment of panic that engulfed the world culminated in Al Qaeda becoming the most feared terrorist organisation. This position allowed Al Qaeda the platform to voice its ideology to the entire world, which had considerable influence over other terrorist groups, even inspiring the otherwise regionally limited terrorist organisations to aspire for more globally oriented goals. As a result, Al Qaeda was able to construct an intricate network connecting itself to the various terrorist organisations and has since been able to influence their activities to varying degrees.

Evidently, terrorist groups do not wish to remain localised, but seek to wield influence over a broader region. By carrying out attacks which are severely damaging, they get international recognition. This perception is then used to promote their ideology in a manner that may influence other groups to join forces with them. Regional groups are also more than willing to participate in this widespread network because it grants them recognition across a wider area, beyond the region wherein they operate.

12. Jason Burke, "Pakistan Intelligence Services 'Aided Mumbai Terror Attacks'", *The Guardian*, October 18, 2010, at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/18/pakistan-isi-mumbai-terror-attacks>

Plus, such a network enhances the functioning of the groups due to sharing of resources and information.

The transnational nature of terrorism is more evident when it comes to the flow of finance and resources to and from these groups. Terrorist groups are funded through complicated channels consisting of various non-governmental organisations, charities, private donations and even legitimate enterprises. Multi-national charitable organisations hold a prime position in this network. Money collected for charity is often diverted and transferred across borders in the name of humanitarian relief or development and then reaches the subsidiaries of these charities from where it reaches the terrorist organisations.¹³ Often, such charitable groups are legitimate bodies and operate across many nations, making the flow of funds even more difficult to track due to differing legalities and the freedom provided to such groups.

For example, groups such as the Al Hamrain Islami Foundation and the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society have been involved in the financial transactions of terrorist groups operating in South Asia.¹⁴ Both these groups operate out of the Gulf region, where they are able to collect money from the wealthy patrons and then are able to move it to South Asia where it reaches the terrorist outfits.

Thus, transnational terrorism becomes the front that comes into existence because of the linkages formed by the terrorist groups. This façade represents the most troubling factor for global peace and security, because it is beyond the ability of any one nation to combat an adversary that spans multiple countries and operates by surpassing geographical and political barriers.

WHY DO TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS FORM NETWORKS?

Cooperation among terrorist groups can be understood in the same way as cooperation among nations or business companies. Various nation-states work together to increase and improve capabilities. For example, cooperation among countries' armies serves to join resources and facilitates

13. Juan Miguel del Cid Gomez, "A Financial Profile of the Terrorism of Al-Qaeda and its Affiliates", *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Online, 2010) v. 4, n. 4, at <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/113/html>

14. Ibid.

the transmission of weapons and knowledge, thereby bolstering mutual power and security.¹⁵ Similarly, business companies cooperate to reduce operational costs and to compete more effectively in the market place.¹⁶ The same is true for terrorist organisations. Just as nations with common goals align with each other, terrorist outfits come together due to similarity in ideologies, which then facilitates cooperation in terms of sharing of resources and capabilities.

Horowitz and Potter state that terrorist groups cooperate to increase their capability to launch effective attacks. By studying different examples of cooperation among terrorist groups, they infer that cooperation increases efficiency. They define efficiency as the number of fatalities inflicted per attack.¹⁷ Fatalities can be used to evaluate the efficacy of terrorist groups because most terrorist organisations seek to demonstrate their capabilities mostly through their ability to kill.¹⁸ This is in collaboration with their ideology to use violence as a means to their ends. Thus, terrorist groups with more linkages are more effective than those with fewer linkages. This is because collaboration diversifies risks and improves capabilities.¹⁹

As stated earlier, cooperation among terrorist organisations is tuned towards pooling resources towards a common goal. But just a common ideology is not sufficient to build an alliance. Horowitz and Potter argue that when groups seek cooperation, they try to seek out groups that have higher capabilities. This results in selective cooperation with only those groups that have demonstrated their capabilities. This results in a core-periphery structure wherein the core has higher capabilities than the periphery. Due to the selective affinity of groups to ally with the core, the periphery gets left behind. This results in a situation wherein the “deadly gets deadlier.”

This concept of core-periphery explains why sometimes various groups work together to achieve the strategic aims of one group, primarily

15. Horowitz and Potter, n. 10.

16. Ibid.

17. Horowitz and Potter, n. 10, p. 210.

18. Ibid.

19. Victor Asal and Karl R. Rethemeyer, “The Nature of the Beas: Organisational Structure and Lethality of Terrorist Attacks”, *Journal of Journal of Politics*, vol. 70 (California: Sage, 2014), p. 440.

We need to understand that in the face of such terrorist alliances, counter-terrorism measures targeting single groups would be futile. Instead, targeting the networks and their connections would be a far more effective way of tackling terrorism.

because the latter has higher capacity. Bruce Riedel's argument that Al Qaeda was the major benefactor of the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament fits in this explanation.²⁰ Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) operatives attacked the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001. At a cursory glance, this attack appears to have no implications for Al Qaeda. However, an examination of the geo-political scenario in the region makes the role of Al Qaeda more apparent. It was the time when the American forces had overthrown

the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, Bin Laden was on the run and President Musharraf had also expressed his support for the Americans. At such a time, an attack of that level led to heightened tension between India and Pakistan, almost escalating to a war-like situation wherein both countries started moving forces towards the border. This diverted the attention of the Pakistani administration from their western border to the eastern one, thereby facilitating the escape of Bin Laden.

Former Indian Minister for External Affairs Jaswant Singh, in his memoirs, has stated that the JeM, Taliban and Al Qaeda had strong linkages. He argues that the hijacking of Indian Airlines flight IC 814, by the JeM facilitated with the support of Al Qaeda and the Taliban could have been a rehearsal for the September 11 attacks. The JeM, in return, managed to arrange the release of its key leaders as the ransom.²¹ Thus, the attack on the Indian Parliament could have been the JeM's way of paying back Al Qaeda. If both these premises are valid, it shows how smaller groups (the JeM in this case) work to facilitate the goals of a more capable group (Al Qaeda). Both sides benefited from this cooperation, but Al Qaeda achieved more than the JeM by arranging safe transit for Bin Laden and learning from the hijacking incident a lesson that it definitely applied in the 9/11 attacks.

20. Riedel, n. 11, pp. 69-70.

21. Ibid., p. 70

These points make the understanding of terrorist networks essential. We need to understand that in the face of such terrorist alliances, counter-terrorism measures targeting single groups would be futile. Instead, targeting the networks and their connections would be a far more effective way of tackling terrorism. The counter-actions should be targeted towards understanding, tracking and disrupting the networks and in order to be most effective, should be driven towards the central nodes rather than the isolated groups or those in the periphery.²²

Al Qaeda's inception was a product of the impact of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in 1979. An elaborate network of fund raising and assistance was created in the Arab world, the US and Europe led by Osama bin Laden.

AL QAEDA

Even before the attacks of 9/11, Al Qaeda was characterised as the new phenomenon in the global terrorist network, distinct from the spatially confined terrorist organisations that had existed earlier in the Middle East. Al Qaeda's inception was a product of the impact of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in 1979. An elaborate network of fund raising and assistance was created in the Arab world, the US and Europe led by Osama bin Laden. The network was called Maktab al Khidamat (MAK), which, according to many experts, was the forerunner of the modern-day Al Qaeda. This can be considered as the inception of the broad network of Al Qaeda because the leaders of the MAK wanted to ensure the continuity of the large volunteer network that was created to fight against the Soviets.

Al Qaeda came into existence on August 11, 1988, when Osama bin Laden decided to create a "base" (Al Qaeda literally means base) in order to organise the recruitment, funding and organisation of these "Afghan Arab" Mujahideen.²³ It was founded on the sole beliefs of Bin Laden and initially

22. Horowitz and Potter, n. 10, p. 201.

23. Al Qaeda, Mapping Militant Organisations, Stanford University, at <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/21>

comprised Afghan Mujahideen who were fighting the Soviet influence in Afghanistan during the Cold War. Bin Laden was against the Soviets because he felt that Communism, being atheist in principle, was against Islam. He was actively supported by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), that provided his group with weapons and financial support, which were delivered with the help of Pakistan's ISI.

After the Soviets left Afghanistan, Bin Laden, decided to use his organisation to fight what he considered was the new threat that the Muslim world faced – the Western world and its influence. He felt that the survival of the Muslim world was being threatened by the spread of the Western ideology and, hence, he called for a “defensive strike” to rid the world of Western influence and to set up an Islamic Caliphate that would impose a strict Sunni interpretation of the *Sharia*.²⁴ In this process to establish what he thought should be the correct Islamic lifestyle, Bin Laden and Al Qaeda opposed all other interpretations of Islamic texts, including those of the Shias, and condemned to death all those who followed, what they deemed as the “unIslamic” way of life.

But the group had to keep changing its base of operations due to governmental pressures. Following the Iran-Iraq War in 1990, Al Qaeda shifted its base from Afghanistan to Sudan. The period between 1990-96 was characterised by Al Qaeda's attempt to build coalitions with the smaller regional terrorist groups all over the world. An alliance was forged linking fellow militant Islamists, from the Abu Sayyaf group of the Philippines to the Islamic Group of Egypt and the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria (GIA).²⁵ After the Sudanese government was forced by international pressure to deny a safe haven to the mushrooming terrorist organisation of Al Qaeda, it had to move its base to Afghanistan, where the Taliban regime was more than willing to support the group.

The attack of 9/11 gave Al Qaeda the recognition of being the most feared terrorist group and it used this moment to pitch its anti-West ideology to

24. Terrorist Organisation Profile: Al-Qaeda, START, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism, at http://www.start.umd.edu/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=6

25. John Rollins, “Al Qaeda and its Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence and Implications for US Policy”, in *Congressional Research Service*, (CRS Report for Congress: Washington D.C, 2011) p. 55, see <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/156542.pdf>

the world. It had already demonstrated its capabilities, which had left the world in a state of fear and shock, and the Government of the United States began retaliation by declaring the “Global War on Terror.” This gave Al Qaeda an opportunity to reach out to other terrorist organisations which were now more than willing to ally with a group that had such a fearful image. This was due to two reasons. First, it was obvious to the groups that they would not be able to stand against a force like the United States on their own. Second, this war created a fear that the West was rising against the entire Islamic world and Islam itself—this perception was the result of a barrage of misinformation and also due to the failure of the West to distinguish Islamist terrorism from Islam itself. This was used effectively by Al Qaeda to gain a foothold and drive its ideology, which led to the formation of an intricate network connecting various terrorist groups. Al Qaeda and Bin Laden personally used their resources to support other groups by setting up training camps for them and also by sending out their own members to help those groups across the world. Soon Al Qaeda had cells in around 100 countries with dozens of allies and affiliates, making its reach extensive and effective.²⁶

The network of Al Qaeda thrived following the declaration of the Global War on Terror. However, it now seems to have grown stronger and more dispersed than before, making it even harder to apply counter-terrorism measures. There is evidence to prove that Al Qaeda’s affiliates and allies have become more assertive after Osama Bin Laden’s death in 2011. This could be because at its core, Al Qaeda’s ideology is profoundly internationalist, attempting to contextualise local conflicts as a part of a broader global struggle against apostasy²⁷.

STRUCTURING THE TERRORIST NETWORK OF AL QAEDA

The terrorist network that grew due to Al Qaeda’s influence has a distinguished hierarchical arrangement. It has a three-tier structure which

26. n. 24.

27. ‘Apostasy’ for Al Qaeda means the infidels of the Islamic religion. Bin Laden called all the regimes in the Middle East apostates because they were not following the fundamentals of Islam and aligning with the liberal West, which Al Qaeda treats as the evil crusaders.

stands as²⁸:

- **Tier I:** This is the core, established by veteran leaders led by the chief of Al Qaeda. This group was led by Bin Laden himself and after his death; Ayman al Zawahiri took up the role. It is assumed to function from the rugged areas across the borders between Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- **Tier II:** This extends to various countries and consists of veteran combatants trained in Afghanistan. They provide training and instructions to the new recruits, using their personal experiences and examples.
- **Tier III:** This consists of newly radicalised militants who form localised cells.

Al Qaeda forms a core with high capabilities and the flow of resources takes place from the core to the periphery. Pooling and sharing of resources is also seen within the various tiers. The desire for more resources and influence may lead to competition among the various groups which desire to move from the periphery to the core, or seek greater dominance within their tier. This can lead to various kinds of interactions. The Mapping Militant Organisations Project of Stanford University defines the following kinds of interactions:²⁹

- **Affiliates:** When a group pledges fealty to, and relies on, support (material, financial, ideological, etc.) and/or guidance from another, usually more senior, group, it is defined as an affiliate of that more senior group.
- **Allies:** When groups share a similar ideology and/or goals and are known to communicate and sometimes even coordinate operations, they are identified as allies. Ally relationships may contain elements of competition amongst groups/group members, but, in general, the relationship is seen as one of cooperation.
- **Merger:** Group mergers occur when two or more groups agree to consolidate resources and operate jointly under the same banner towards the same cause, thus, forming a new group. Group mergers

28. Gomez, n. 13.

29. Definitions, Mapping Militant Organisations, Stanford University. See <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/pages/definitions>

require one or all groups to shed their original identity and commit to the new group's articulated vision.

- **Rivals:** When groups engage in sustained competition, often vying for resources, prestige, and/or support, they are considered to be rivals. Rival groups can engage in violence against each other, though sometimes the rivalry is less explicit. Shared ideology does not preclude groups from being rivals. Some rivalries may contain elements of cooperation, but, in general, the relationship is defined as one of competitiveness.
- **Splits:** When part of one group establishes itself as an independent entity (almost always with a new name), it splits from the parent group. A group may also splinter into several smaller groups. It is important to note that splits are not always the result of dissension; sometimes, a split is a tactical decision. For example, splitting into militant and political arms might grant the political arm more legitimacy while still allowing it to carry out militant activities.
- **Umbrella Organisations:** When separate but like-minded groups formally organise under a single banner to show unity of purpose and strategic and/or tactical cooperation, they do so under umbrella organisations. Groups that are part of an umbrella organisation usually retain their original identities and names, and can still function independently.

AL QAEDA'S TERRORIST NETWORK IN INDIA

South Asia has been one of the worst victims of terrorism, especially Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Afghanistan and Pakistan are the home ground of Al Qaeda, which is at the apex of the terrorist network operating in South Asia. The region is also littered with a large number of terrorist organisations, which work alone or cooperate to fulfil their objectives.

India too has its own share of Islamist terrorist groups, most of which operate out of Pakistan, while there are a few that operate out of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), and some home grown organisations. The secession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) from India, and its assimilation into Pakistan, is the primary objectives of most of the groups that operate

If a network were to be established for the groups in India, Al Qaeda would be at the apex followed by the four most prominent groups of the region that have direct established linkages to Al Qaeda. These are Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT), Harkat-ul-Jihadi al-Islami (HuJI), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and they represent Tier II of the network.

in India, many of which are actively supported by Pakistan's intelligence agency. The ISI uses these outfits to wage proxy wars and to create an environment of disturbance for the Government of India. Only a handful of these groups have direct links to Al Qaeda and most of the others belong to the lower rung of Tier II or III of the network. Establishing Islamic rule in India as a part of the Global Caliphate is another aim towards which these groups work. They look at Kashmir as a gateway to India to form a continuous belt of an Islamic rule which starts from West Asia and continues beyond South Asia. After establishing Islamic rule as per the strict Sunni interpretation of the *Sharia*, the

groups want to extend their domain to the rest of the country.

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The various groups have been analysed in detail in the coming sections of the paper and the linkages among them have been established using data available in the public domain. A special mention must be made about the Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and its militant outfit – the Indian Mujahideen (IM). Both these groups have been suspected of having links with some of the groups of Tier II of the network and some claims about their relations with Al Qaeda have also been made. However, it has

not been possible to to establish these linkages beyond reasonable doubt and, hence, the groups have not been included in the study.

Let us look at the groups and their relationships in detail.

LASHKAR-E-TAYYEB (LET)

Aliases: Lashkar-e-Taiba, Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, Army of the Pure, Army of the Righteous

The LeT has been responsible for some of the most high profile attacks in India, which include the November 2008 attack on Mumbai and the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament. The group was formed in 1990 in the Kunar province of Afghanistan, and is based in Muridke near Lahore in Pakistan.³⁰

It is headed by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, who is a learned Islamic scholar and was appointed by the Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq to the Council of Islamic Ideology.³¹ His antagonism towards India could emanate from the fact that he lost around 36 members of his family when they were migrating from Shimla to Pakistan after Partition.³² He supports Al Qaeda's view of a pan-Islamic world and accordingly, works towards establishing an Islamic rule in India to create a Muslim state stretching all around Pakistan.

The LeT was active as one of the Mujahideen groups in Afghanistan during the Cold War. Its cadres fought alongside the Taliban against the Northern Alliance forces and the LeT allegedly became close to Pakistan's ISI during this time. The latter was active in fuelling the Mujahideen against the Soviets and were used by the US to distribute funds to support the Afghan fighters. The ISI, under the leadership of Gen Akhtar Abdur Rehman, and through individuals such as Abdallah Azzam, began using

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30. Lashkar-e-Toiba, South Asian Terrorism Portal, at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/lashkar_e_toiba.htm

31. Praveen Swamy, "Pakistan and Lashkar's Jihad in India", *The Hindu*, December 9, 2009, at <http://www.hindu.com/2008/12/09/stories/2008120955670800.htm>

32. Ibid.

the Afghan groups as elements of the proxy war against India.³³ Azzam worked with Saeed to apply the lessons learnt in Afghanistan into their strategy in Kashmir.³⁴ The LeT began using its training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan to train recruits who could carry out attacks in India. The ISI started supporting the LeT, which in return was more than happy to receive the support because of its isolation from the local Al Hadith groups, that had shunned the LeT because of their extremist interpretation of the concept of *jihad*.³⁵

The LeT's presence in J&K was first recorded in 1993 when 12 Pakistani and Afghan mercenaries infiltrated across the Line of Control (LoC) in tandem with the Islami Inquilabi Mahaz, a terrorist outfit then active in the Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).³⁶ Around this time, it became a part of the United Jihadi Council, wherein it formed alliances with other groups operating in the region such as the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) and Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI). Over the years, it has collaborated with many of them to carry out attacks on Indian soil, but its relationship especially with the JeM has deteriorated primarily due to rivalry for the ISI's support.³⁷

The same organisation, the ISI, has continued to provide support to the LeT since its inception, the most recent proof of which came with the Mumbai attacks of 26/11, when the arrested LeT operative David Coleman Headley admitted this.³⁸ For the attack, Headley collaborated with a former ISI asset, who later defected to the Al Qaeda, Ilyas Kashmiri, who coordinated between the LeT and Al Qaeda.³⁹

But this was not the first time that links between Al Qaeda and the LeT had suffered. LeT chief Saeed had always maintained close ties with Azzam, as mentioned earlier. Azzam was the co-founder of the Maktab al Khidamat,

33. Riedel, n. 11, p. 26.

34. Ibid., p. 30.

35. Lashkar-e-Taiba, Mapping Militant Organisations, Stanford University, at <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/79>

36. Riedel, n. 11.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., p. 91.

39. Ibid.

which was the founding group of Al Qaeda.⁴⁰ LeT's operational commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi is the brother-in-law of senior Al Qaeda member and a deputy under Bin Laden, Abu Abdur Rahman Sareehi.⁴¹ Lakhvi, incidentally, was also the mentor of Ajmal Kasab (who was arrested as the sole surviving executor of the Mumbai attacks) and had close personal relations with him.⁴² The LeT's ties with Al Qaeda were further confirmed when Abu Zubaydah, the third in command of Al Qaeda under Bin Laden, was arrested in March 2002 from a LeT safe house in Faisalabad.⁴³ Post 9/11, the LeT was actively involved with Al Qaeda and received US\$ 100,000 to protect Al Qaeda leaders and to facilitate their transit.

In the present context, it can be summed up that the LeT is the most well connected terrorist group operating in the region, enjoying cordial relationships with Al Qaeda, the ISI and a plethora of other terrorist outfits operating in the region.

HARKAT-UL-JIHAD AL-ISLAMI (HUJI)

Alias: Movement of Islamic Holy War

HuJI was one of the first extremist groups to operate in Kashmir. It was initially formed in the early 1980s to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan and was supported by the ISI. As with the LeT, the end of the Cold War made HuJI turn towards Kashmir to fight for its separation from India. It became one of the groups actively supported by the ISI to carry out attacks in the Kashmir Valley and has since then, expanded its reach to carry out attacks such as that on the American Centre in Kolkata in 2002 and the Dispur bombings in Assam in 2008.

HuJI, along with the LeT, HuM and JeM constitutes the four most prominent groups in Tier II of Al Qaeda's network in India. Incidentally, the HuM and JeM, both began as splinter groups from HuJI. HuJI's ties to Al Qaeda exist because of its founder Qari Saifullah Akhtar. Akhtar was trained

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., p. 88

43. Ibid.

in the Jamia Binoria Madrassa in Karachi⁴⁴, which has been responsible for producing some of the most high profile terrorists in the region. It was here that he met Fazlur Rehman Khalil and Masood Azhar, who later parted ways from the HuJI to form the HuM and JeM respectively, which will be discussed later in the paper.

The HuJI's connection to Al Qaeda can also be traced through its leader Muhammad Ilyas Kashmiri who also serves as the head of military operations for Al Qaeda.⁴⁵ As mentioned earlier, he was involved in the 2008 attacks on Mumbai and was coordinating with David Headley to see if a similar attack could be organised in Denmark, to protest against the cartoons of the Prophet published in a Danish newspaper.⁴⁶ Kashmiri was born in Mirpur⁴⁷ Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and was trained by the ISI and he later moved into Al Qaeda.⁴⁸ In the 1990s, he started his own group called 313 Brigade⁴⁹, which was responsible for the beheading of Indian Army soldiers in February 2002⁵⁰. The Pakistani authorities appreciated this act and Kashmiri was even awarded a cash-prize by Pervez Musharraf.⁵¹

Although the splits have made HuJI less effective, with most of its members now working for either the HuM or JeM, it continues to hold prime importance from a counter-terrorism perspective due to its vast network. Apart from India, HuJI is active in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and even parts of Africa.⁵² Its branches in Bangladesh are a major concern for India because of the support they receive from certain political sections.⁵³ The group maintains strong links with the Taliban and

44. Harkat-ul-Jihadi al-Islami, Mapping Militant Organisations, Stanford University, at <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/217>

45. Baba Umar, "Al Qaeda Gets a New Military Chief in Kashmiri. India Tops His Hit List", *Tehelka*, December 4, 2012, at <http://www.tehelka.com/al-qaeda-gets-a-new-military-chief-in-kashmiri-india-tops-his-hit-list/>

46. Riedel, p. 101.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., p. 40

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Umar, n. 45

53. Bruce Vaughn, "Bangladesh: Political and Strategic Developments and U.S. Interests", *Report for Congress* (Congressional Research Service, Washington D. C.) April 1, 2010, at <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41194.pdf>

Al Qaeda and has also been suspected of collaborating with the Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). It also has ties with militant groups operating in India's northeast, including the Assam-based United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and the Manipur-based People's United Liberation Front (PULF).⁵⁴ It is reported to run some of ULFA's camps situated in the Chittagong region in Bangladesh along the border of Tripura.⁵⁵

HARKAT-UL-MUJAHIDEEN (HuM)

Aliases: Harakat-ul-Mujahidin, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Mujahidin, Harkat Mujahideen, Islamic Freedom Fighters' Group, Jamia-ul-Ansar

The HuM emerged as a splinter group in 1985, separating from HuJI due to ideological differences and disputes over financial allocations for the operations.⁵⁶ The group primarily seeks Kashmir's secession from India. Although it also declares itself to be against what it considers "anti-Islamic", Kashmir still holds a higher prerogative.⁵⁷ This could have been one reason why it parted with HuJI, which is considerably more extremist in its Islamist ideology.

However, the separation deeply affected the functioning of the groups and this could be why they reunited in 1993 to form the group Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuA). It has been alleged that the ISI took the initiative towards forming this alliance⁵⁸, which could be due to the fact that it was worried about the waning of militant operations in Kashmir as a result of the split. However, soon after 1993, the Indian authorities managed to arrest three of top leaders of the HuA. Hence, the HuA began several operations to obtain the release of the leaders. This resulted in several kidnappings of soldiers (January 1994), foreign tourists (June 1994) and ordinary civilians (October

54. Umar, n. 45

55. Ibid.

56. Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Mapping Militant Organisations, Stanford University, at <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/219>

57. Terrorist Organisation Profile: Harakat ul-Mujahidin, START, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism at http://www.start.umd.edu/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=50

58. Ibid.

The HuM has for long enjoyed extremely cordial ties with Al Qaeda, primarily because of its leader: Fazlur Rehman Khalil. Khalil was one of the five signatories of Osama bin Laden's February 1998 *fatwa* called, "The World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders."

1994). But all of these attempts failed as the Indian government refused to pay heed to the ransom demands. It was then that the HuM carried out the infamous hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight IC 814 in December 1999, which eventually succeeded in its mission, as Masood Azhar, Umar Saeed Sheikh and Mushtak Ahmed Zargar were released by the Indian authorities in return for the passengers. This attack was carried out with help from the ISI and the Taliban and the then ISI Chief Lt Gen Mahmud Ahmad's role in this incident has been openly discussed due to his familiarity

with the Taliban.⁵⁹

However, Masood Azhar joined the HuA on his release and then went ahead to create his own group: the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).⁶⁰ This split severely crippled the capacity of the HuA as most of the members left with Azhar. As a result, HuA could not continue for very long and split into its initial constituents: the HuJI and HuM and a third front – the JeM.

The HuM has for long enjoyed extremely cordial ties with Al Qaeda, primarily because of its leader: Fazlur Rehman Khalil. Khalil was one of the five signatories of Osama bin Laden's February 1998 *fatwa* called, "The World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders."⁶¹

JAISH-E-MOHAMMAD (JEM)

Aliases: Jaish-e-Mohammed, Army of the Prophet

As stated earlier, the JeM came into existence when HuM leader Masood Azhar split away from the JeM after his release from prison to create his

59. Riedel, n. 11, p. 59

60. Ibid.

61. n. 57.

own group. The reason for this split has been speculated to be internal ethnic differences in the HuM.⁶² Most of the HuM's Punjabi members, who constituted a considerable share, left the group along with Azhar, severely affecting its capabilities.⁶³ This split created severe tensions between the two groups and clashes erupted, leading to the JeM killing a few members of the HuM.⁶⁴ Eventually, the groups reached an understanding, wherein the JeM gave all its assets in Punjab to the HuM in return for money.⁶⁵

Eventually, this group grew with the constant support of the ISI, Taliban and Al Qaeda, and has become one of the most active and deadly terrorist groups in the region. The ISI had played an important role in the creation of the JeM by helping in organising fund raisers to push start the group.⁶⁶ One of the JeM's most critical attacks was on the Indian Parliament in 2001, in which the issue of the ISI's connection has come up time and again.⁶⁷ In fact, it was due to this closeness with the ISI that the JeM developed a rivalry with the LeT and the relations between these two groups soured.⁶⁸ The JeM also developed rivalry with the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) due to its increasing influence in Kashmir.⁶⁹

Over the years, the JeM has become increasingly aggressive and even turned against the Pakistani state. This was primarily due to the changing stance of President Musharraf, who under the American pressure, was

The JeM has become increasingly aggressive and even turned against the Pakistani state. This was primarily due to the changing stance of President Musharraf, who under the American pressure, was beginning to express anti-terrorist sentiments.

62. Jaish-e-Mohammad, Mapping Militant Organisations, Stanford University, at <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/95#note38>

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Riedel, n. 11, p. 59.

67. J.T. Vishnu, "ISI Supervised Parliament Attack", *The Tribune*, December 16, 2001, at <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2001/20011217/main1.htm>

68. n. 62.

69. Ibid.

beginning to express anti-terrorist sentiments. This did not go well with Al Qaeda, and Bin Laden's then deputy, Ayman al Zawahiri, released an audiotape calling for Musharraf's ouster.⁷⁰ In December 2003, the JeM attempted to assassinate Musharraf⁷¹, which dealt the final blow to ISI-JEM relations. The assassination attempts made it clear that there were perpetrators within Musharraf's security detail who knew about his travel plans, which put the ISI on a tight spot as well.⁷² Musharraf took strong steps like replacing the ISI chief and arresting several JeM operatives. This culminated in a selective counter-terrorism campaign by Pakistan in which certain groups were targeted while others were left untouched.⁷³

The JeM has also maintained strong ties with Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Its relations with the Al Qaeda can be traced back to the time when Azhar was a part of the propaganda team of HuM and was posted in Africa where he supposedly met Bin Laden and even fought with him in Somalia.⁷⁴ JeM members were trained in Al Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan prior to America's invasion of the region. Its relations with the Taliban can be established by the fact that the Taliban uses the JeM's official newsletter *Zarb-e-Momin*, as its mouthpiece.⁷⁵ *Zarb-e-Momin* was originally founded by the Al-Rashid Trust (ART), a charity organisation that also facilitates the transit of money and weapons for terrorist groups in the region. ART's founder Mufti Rashi and Azhar had studied together in the Jamia Binoria Madrassa in Karachi and this gave the JeM access to ART's funding and thereby, enabled it to gain a foothold in the region.⁷⁶

70. Salman Masood, "Pakistani Leader Escapes Attempt at Assassination", *The New York Times*, December 26, 2003, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/26/world/pakistani-leader-escapes-attempt-at-assassination.html>

71. Ibid.

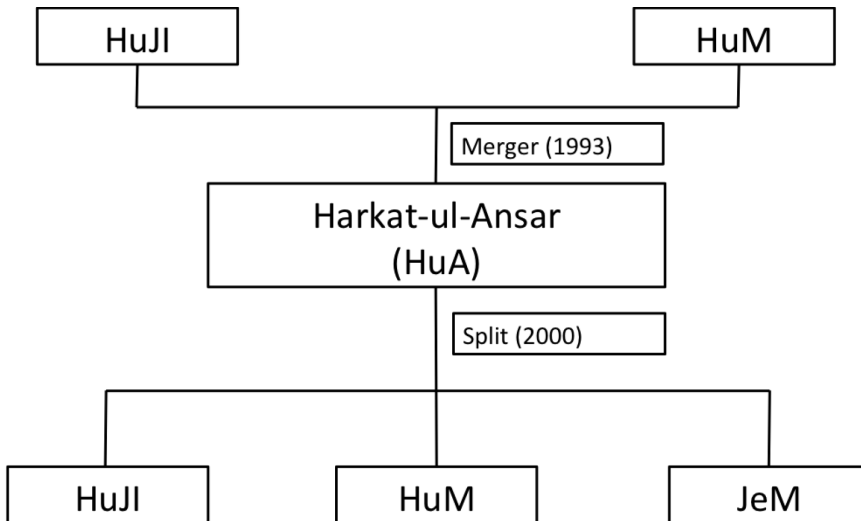
72. Riedel, n. 11, p. 70.

73. Ibid.

74. n. 62.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

Fig 1: The Relationship Between the HuJI and its Splinter Groups**HIZB-UL-MUJAHIDEEN (HM)**

Aliases: Hizbul Mujahideen, Hizb-ul-Mujahidin, and HM of the Jamaat-e-Islami

The HM is one of the Tier III organisations that operates in the region, but is considerably powerful and influential. Formed in the year 1989, the group's primary objective is to separate Kashmir from India and make it a part of Pakistan, although some of its members support complete independence of the state.⁷⁷ The group is supposed to have started as the military wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami, Pakistan, and is said to have come into existence as a brainchild of the ISI, which along with Jamaat created HM as an Islamic counter to the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).⁷⁸

77. Terrorist Organisation Profile: Hizbul-Mujahidin, START, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism at http://www.start.umd.edu/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=52

78. Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, South Asian Terrorism Portal, at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/hizbul_mujahideen.htm

AUM still operates in the Kashmir Valley and seeks secession of Jammu and Kashmir from India, to establish it as a part of Pakistan. Towards this goal, it has worked along with the JeM and has been supported by the Government of Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

The group is mostly made up of ethnic Kashmiris and has some foreign fighters, and their attacks have killed almost 200 people in the last 12 years.⁷⁹ Syed Salahuddin headed the group, while its chief commander was Abdul Majeed Dar. Dar was a very influential personality, who claimed to have direct access to Nawaz Sharif and Pervez Musharraf.⁸⁰ In July 2000, Dar made a conditional offer of a ceasefire to the Indian government, a move that was endorsed by Salahuddin. However, in August 2000, Salahuddin had a change of opinion, which could have been due to the

pressure from other terrorist groups. On March 2003, Dar was shot dead by operatives of the Al Umar Mujahideen, another group funded by the ISI.⁸¹ The death of Dar resulted in a fight within the group to grab his position. Clashes broke out between Dar's followers and those of Salahuddin. It was later learnt that that before Dar's death, Salahuddin and the ISI had worked towards marginalising him⁸², which could have been because they had learned of his intentions for a ceasefire. But, Dar's stance and his death drove the various smaller groups in the region against each other and chaos ensued in their fight for influence.

Nonetheless, the HM has been one of the prime targets of Indian counter-terrorism plans. The Indian intelligence reports that it is responsible for only about 10 to 20 per cent of all terrorist strikes, while the Pakistani reports estimate that it controls about 60 per cent of the terrorists operating in Kashmir.⁸³ It maintains close ties with the HuJI and LeT and several

79. Global Terrorism Database: Hizbul-Mujahidin, START, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism at <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

80. Ibid.

81. Kanchan Lakshman, "Shock and Outrage", *Outlook*, March 24, 2003, at <http://www.outlookindia.com/printarticle.aspx?219532>

82. Ibid.

83. n. 78.

other smaller groups in the region. This association could be attributed to the fact that Syed Salahuddin also heads the United Jihadi Council (UJC), which is the association of all the groups that operate in Jammu and Kashmir.

AL UMAR MUJAHIDEEN (AUM)

AUM is one of the Tier III groups founded by Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar in 1989. Zargar was arrested by the Indian security forces in the year 1992, but was one of the prisoners released in exchange for the passengers of the hijacked India Airlines Flight IC 814.

AUM still operates in the Kashmir Valley and seeks secession of Jammu and Kashmir from India, to establish it as a part of Pakistan. Towards this goal, it has worked along with the JeM and has been supported by the Government of Pakistan occupied Kashmir, based in Muzaffarabad.⁸⁴ It is also a part of the United Jihadi Council (UJC), which is a conglomerate of 15 Pakistan-based terrorist organisations that operate out of Muzaffarabad. Pakistan's ISI had appointed Zargar as the chief coordinator to carry out attacks on the candidates and political parties in the legislative election of 2002 in Jammu and Kashmir.⁸⁵

TEHREEK-UL-MUJAHIDEEN (TUM)

The Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen was founded in 1990 by Yunus Khan to promote the cause of the annexation of Jammu and Kashmir into Pakistan. It also seeks protection of the Asidih community, a small faction of Sunni Muslims.⁸⁶

The TuM is a member of the United Jihadi Council and is funded by the ISI and has established links with the LeT and HuJI. It works as an important organisation responsible for supplying arms and resources into Indian territory.

84. Al Umar Mujahideen, South Asian Terrorism Portal, at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/Al_Umar.htm

85. Ibid.

86. Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen, South Asian Terrorism Portal, at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/Tehreek_ul_Mujahideen.htm

The TuM is a member of the United Jihadi Council and is funded by the ISI and has established links with the LeT and HuJI. It works as an important organisation responsible for supplying arms and resources into Indian territory. It does so by working along with the Bangladeshi group, Ahle Hadis Youth Association that helps it to transport weapons from Pakistan to India through Bangladesh and Nepal.⁸⁷ It also helps in the distribution of funds through the *hawala* network.

UNITED JIHADI COUNCIL (UJC)

Alias: Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC)

The UJC or the MJC is an association of the various Pakistan-based terrorist groups that operate in Jammu and Kashmir. It was formed in November 1990, to bring all the groups under one umbrella to resolve the various differences that had erupted between them over time. The council aims to enhance the capabilities of the various groups in the region by arranging for sharing of resources and information. To facilitate this, the groups signed a *Muwakhaat* (agreement on the basis of brotherhood), which states, among other points, that no group can stage an attack in Kashmir without the prior permission of the council.⁸⁸

It has been said that the UJC was a brainchild of the ISI, created to control the large number of smaller terrorist groups that had sprung up in the region.⁸⁹ Merging the smaller organisations into groups curbed the number of their representatives in the council. It was a smart step to effectively reduce the voice of these smaller groups.

The chief of the HM, Syed Salahuddin, heads the group. Salahuddin and his group were ousted from the council when the HM declared a ceasefire with the Indian security forces. But when he did not support this decision, he and his group were taken back and he was reelected as its head.

87. Ibid.

88. Muttahida Jihad Council, South Asian Terrorism Portal, at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/mjc.htm

89. Ibid.

As per the South Asian Terrorism Portal, the following terrorist outfits are currently members of the Muttahida Jihad Council:⁹⁰

- Hizb-ul-Mujahideen
- Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front
- Harkat-ul-Ansar
- Tehrik-e-Jehad
- Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen
- Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen
- Al Jihad
- Al Umar Mujahideen
- Jammu Kashmir Islamic Front
- Muslim Janbaz Force
- Hizbullah
- Al Fatah
- Hizb-ul-Momineen
- Lashkar-e-Tayyeba
- Jaish-e-Mohammed
- Al-Badr Mujahideen

AL RASHID TRUST (ART)

Al Rashid Trust is a Pakistan-based charity that provides support to terrorist organisations all over the world and was used to help in the distribution of weapons and finances in the guise of humanitarian aid.⁹¹ It was supported by the ISI but the Pakistan government seized all its bank accounts after the US designated it a terrorist organisation. Since then, the Al Akhtar Trust (AKT) has acquired it and has been operating the group.⁹²

ART had been associated with the Taliban and Al Qaeda. It ran a website in Britain called Global Jihadi Fund, which was openly associated

90. Ibid.

91. Al Rashid Trust, Mapping Militant Organisations, Stanford University, at <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/117>

92. Ibid.

with Bin Laden.⁹³ The head of ART was Mufti Rashi, who reported to JeM leader Masood Azhar. Rashid and Azhar had been students at the Jamia Binoria Madrassa in Karachi⁹⁴ and Azhar regularly contributed to the ART newspaper *Zarb-e-Momin*, which was later acquired by the JeM. In return, Rashid funded the JeM and also arranged for Azhar to be declared as the emir of the Taliban in Jammu and Kashmir.⁹⁵

AL AKHTAR TRUST (AKT)

The Al Akhtar Trust is a Pakistan-based charity organisation, which took over the functioning of ART, once its bank accounts were seized. It is an offshoot of the JeM and arranges delivery of arms in the guise of humanitarian aid.⁹⁶ The AKT and ART are two organisation most used by Al Qaeda to send supplies to Kashmir. The chief of the JeM, Masood Azhar, is currently the head of the AKT.

Over the years, the group has also participated in genuine relief operations such as providing aid to the victims of the earthquake of October 5, 2005, which brought it some positive publicity.⁹⁷ It used this platform to recruit members and gather fund and also provide logistic and financial support to the LeT, JeM, HM and HuM.

93. Chris Hastings and David Banmber, "British Cash and Fighters Still Flow to bin Laden" *The Telegraph*, January 27, 2002, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1382816/British-cash-and-fighters-still-flow-to-bin-Laden.html>

94. n. 91.

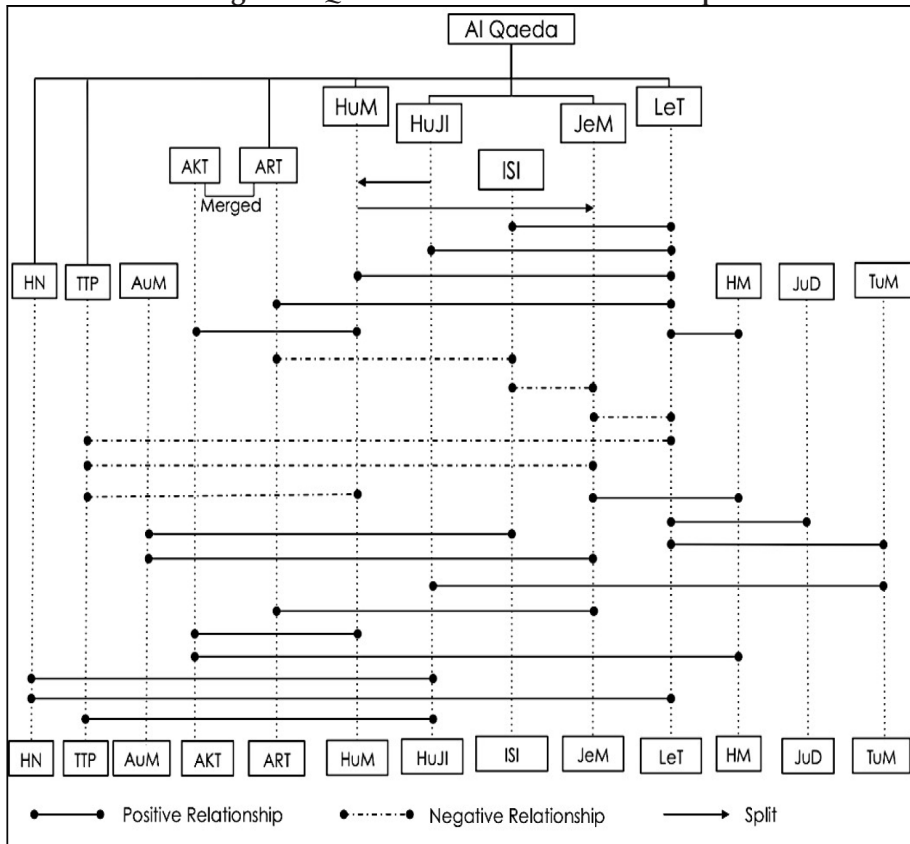
95. Ibid.

96. Al Akhtar Trust, Mapping Militant Organisations, Stanford University, at <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/111>

97. Amir Mir, "On the Terror Trail", *The Tribune*, April 2, 2006, at <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060402/spectrum/main1.htm>

ANALYSING THE NETWORK

Fig 2: Al Qaeda's Terrorist Network Map



As can be seen in Fig 2, Al Qaeda operates in India through four main organisations: HuM, HuJI, LeT and JeM, which constitute Tier II of the network. These groups are further linked to various other smaller groups such as the HM, AUM and TuM. The figure also shows two other organisations that are linked directly to Al Qaeda – the Haqqani Network (HN) and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Both these groups operate in Pakistan, hence, they have not been studied in detail. But they do maintain relations with the groups operating in India. The two charity organisations, AKT and ART, that have been represented in the figure, facilitate the distribution of funds and resources. The figure also shows the

India needs to be more watchful of the various non-governmental organisations and the various charity groups that work in its territory to ensure that the funds collected by these groups and also provided to these groups from various other groups, are not utilised for terrorist purposes.

LeT's political front, the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD). The relationship of the ISI with the various groups is central to understanding the network that operates in India.

An analysis of the figure reveals that the LeT is the most connected group in the region. As stated earlier, terrorist groups with the most linkages are the most lethal ones. This is because of their larger influence in the region, which is supplemented by the ability to orchestrate attacks. Indian counter-terrorism attempts so far have been diverted towards attacking the groups in Tier III, especially the HM. This is primarily

because the HM is the most active, with constant attacks that continue to draw the attention of the authorities.

However, one needs to understand that these groups in Tier III depend greatly on the support of the groups in the upper tiers. The vast number in Tier III creates fear in the mind of the observer, but it has to be understood that their efficacy is limited and such groups are often created to increase the area of influence of a certain ideology, which may not always be operationally effective. Similarly, a large number of smaller organisations simply align themselves with the core, just for the prestige this holds. Such groups are rarely capable of acting alone. Hence, targeting these lower level organisations will hardly count as an effective counter-terrorism policy.

Instead, counter-actions should be targeted at two areas – the key nodes and the distribution system for the flow of resources and funds. Targeting the key groups in Tier II is essential because these are the actual functioning centres of the network. But such action is not easy to take. First, all of these groups operate from foreign soil or from areas that are not under our federal control. Hence, direct action, short of a war, can be orchestrated only through the intelligence agencies. A covert operation comes with its own set of risks, which get especially magnified in the context of India and

Pakistan. The other way is to build political and international pressure over Pakistan to coerce it to act against the groups acting from its territory. As a sovereign state, Pakistan needs to be held responsible for the activities (even if these are not linked with state bodies such as the ISI) emerging from its soil, and the international community needs to build up more political pressure to compel it to act.

Targeting the flow of resources is again not an easy task. Most of these distribution channels transverse national boundaries and, hence, counter actions require international cooperation to a greater extent. In this regard, India recently joined the Financial Action Task Force, which is an inter-governmental body seeking to fight money laundering and terrorist financing. Accordingly, it brought out amendments in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, to include the economic components of terrorism to curb financing of terror. India has also entered into agreements facilitating sharing of intelligence with other nations to counter terrorism.

India needs to be more watchful of the various non-governmental organisations and the various charity groups that work in its territory to ensure that the funds collected by these groups and also provided to these groups from various other groups, are not utilised for terrorist purposes. Further, India needs to secure its geographical borders to prevent smuggling of weapons into its lands.

Lack of centrality of counter-terrorism related functions has been a major issue in combating terrorism. Maintenance of law and order is the prerogative of the states but most states lack the political will to do so. The governments at the Centre and in the states have failed to reach a bipartisan consensus on how to tackle such issues, and any strong step by the Centre is seen as encroachment upon the powers of the state. This results in lack

Just as a terrorist network operates through cooperation among the various terrorist groups, it is only through cooperation among nations that such a network can be undone. In this regards, nations have to look beyond their selfish political gains towards a common good and a common goal.

of coordination between the state bodies while the terror groups are able to move easily from one state to another within India.

CONCLUSION

When it comes to fighting terrorism, it is important to understand the way both sides perceive victory. For a terrorist group, success is determined by its sheer ability to carry out an attack, without consideration about the efficiency of the attack. In this regard, most groups fight to exist and develop their network because that, for them, is a symbolic victory. On the other hand, for a state, success is determined by its ability to prevent the occurrence of a terror attack. Most countries such as India, do not, and cannot, effectively act on the central groups primarily because these groups operate from beyond their political borders. Such a situation promotes the growth of the network which survives and thrives on the low scale attacks executed by the smaller groups.

The destruction of these smaller groups does not matter to the upper echelons of terrorism because such units can be easily created and supported. Thus, countries need to look more towards the network itself and consider it the enemy that has to be defeated. This is easier said than done because the network is large and organic, and is cleverly modifying itself to fight the states, while enlarging at the same time. The role of intelligence gets highlighted beyond any other tool of counter-operations and it is by increasing the quality and quantum of intelligence that states can dismantle this network.

And, finally, just as a terrorist network operates through cooperation among the various terrorist groups, it is only through cooperation among nations that such a network can be undone. In this regards, nations have to look beyond their selfish political gains towards a common good and a common goal.