

TERRORISM FOCUS

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NEW CHIEF OF PAKISTAN'S ISI DEFENDS TALIBAN'S RIGHT TO JIHAD

In a recent interview with Germany's *Der Spiegel*, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director-General, Lieutenant-General Ahmad Shuja Pasha, gave a rather startling reply when asked about the reluctance of Pakistan's military to apprehend senior Taliban leaders based in Quetta and elsewhere in Pakistan: "Shouldn't they be allowed to think and say what they please? They believe that jihad is their obligation. Isn't that freedom of opinion?" (*Der Spiegel*, January 6). The remark was undoubtedly of concern to U.S. counter-terrorism officials, who view the ISI with deep suspicion and have had only limited success in encouraging Pakistan's military to engage Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Pakistan's north-west frontier region. General Pasha directed military operations in that region from 2005 until his appointment as ISI commander on September 29, 2008.

Pakistan's military later downplayed the ISI chief's remarks through the armed forces' Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), which claimed that "important issues have been reported out of context or have been incorrectly constructed as a result of mistranslation... Some of the things reported are either incongruous or have not been clearly stated." ISPR added that the general's "views on the handling of al-Qaeda and other terrorists have been incorrectly reported" (NDTV [New Delhi], January 7; *Daily Times* [Lahore], January 10). ISPR claims of mistranslation may be a reach – *Der Spiegel* noted that the interview was conducted in English and in the General's "surprisingly accent-free German," learned while taking officer training in Germany during the 1980s.

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The leader of the opposition in Pakistan's National Assembly, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan (leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (N)), said the ISI chief should not be giving media interviews and described his remarks as "out of place" (*Daily Times*, January 13).

General Pasha denied that he and Armed Forces commander Ashfaq Pervez Kayani discussed U.S. drone attacks on Taliban and al-Qaeda suspects on Pakistani territory during a meeting with U.S. officials held on the USS *Abraham Lincoln* aircraft carrier last August: "We never discussed that, nor did we agree to it... But to be honest, what can we do against the drone attacks? Should we fight the Americans or attack an Afghan post, because that's where the drones are coming from? Can we win this? Does it benefit Pakistan?"

In another recent *Spiegel* interview, the head of Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS – domestic intelligence), Amrullah Saleh, noted, "When the Americans offered to fight the [Taliban/al-Qaeda] fighters themselves, the Pakistanis rejected them, saying you can't go in, we are a sovereign state. The true reason behind this is that Islamabad is providing the militant groups with ammunition and training" (*Der Spiegel*, December 8, 2008).

The ISI director also stated that he reports "regularly to the president [Asif Ali Zardari] and take orders from him." The problem is that ISI is supposed to report to the Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza Gilani (*Dawn* [Karachi], July 27, 2008; BBC, July 28, 2008). Prime Minister Gilani was forced to drop plans to transfer control of the ISI to the Interior Ministry last summer after objections from Armed Forces commander Ashfaq Pervez Kayani and the General Staff (*The Nation* [Islamabad], July 27, 2008; *Times of India*, August 6, 2008; BBC, July 28, 2008). Pasha was appointed head of the ISI by General Kayani last September, despite efforts by the Prime Minister to assume control of the appointment process.

During the *Spiegel* interview, Lt.-Gen. Pasha suggested a war with India over the Mumbai incident was unlikely: "We may be crazy in Pakistan, but not completely out of our minds. We know full well that terror is our enemy, not India."

INDONESIAN JIHADIS PREPARE FOR GAZA INTERVENTION

Israel's assault on Gaza has brought widespread condemnation from the Muslim world, though no Muslim nation has dared intervene so far. In many cases this official position is at variance with popular sentiments, as in distant Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation.

With no Israeli embassy in Jakarta (the two nations have no diplomatic relations) and no Jewish population to speak of, Indonesian anger at the Gaza incursion has at times been hard-pressed to find an avenue for expression. The country's lone synagogue, a barely used and rabbi-less building in Surabaya, has been the target of angry mobs shouting "Go to hell, Israel" while burning Israeli flags (Antara News Agency [Jakarta], January 8). An unlucky KFC outlet in Central Sulawesi province was overrun by 300 protesters enraged over US support for Israel, who fortunately restricted their violence to the furniture (Xinhua, January 8). Demonstrations have also occurred at Jakarta's Egyptian and U.S. embassies.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's government will be seeking re-election in April, so it is being forced to address public anger at Israel while preventing non-government players from taking actions that might be outside the national interest. According to President Yudhoyono, "I've talked to Middle East leaders, to the Palestinian ambassador to Indonesia, to the UN Resident Coordinator in Indonesia...and [the conclusion is] additional weaponry, bombs, rockets, tanks, or air power are not what the Gazans need" (*Jakarta Post*, January 17). The government views financial and humanitarian aid as the best way to help the Palestinians of Gaza, though there are many in Indonesia who would prefer to see more material military assistance sent from Indonesia to pursue "jihad" against Israel for its actions in Gaza.

Indonesia's Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia – TNI) already have a peacekeeping unit of 210 soldiers deployed in Lebanon as part of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). TNI chief General Djoko Santoso has indicated Indonesia is ready to contribute to another peacekeeping force in Gaza if required (Antara, January 12).

There are a number of Indonesian Islamist groups seeking government support to send fighters to Gaza, including the Islam Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam - FPI) and Hizb ut-Tahir Indonesia (HTI). In Bandung, West Java, the FPI is providing physical, military, and mental training to 40 recruits in a factory (*Jakarta Post*, January 16). In the Jember region of East Java, the organization says it has recruited 60 Muslim youth for front-line service against Israel (*Jakarta Post*, January 7). The recruits are receiving a brief period of training in the methods of Pencak Silat, a traditional Indonesian martial arts movement strongly associated with anti-colonialism. The FPI claims to have 4,000 volunteers for service in Gaza, but can only afford to send three to five fighters, who will receive a perfunctory ten days of instruction, though weapons training is not part of the curriculum: "We won't be teaching them how to use weapons. They will have to learn in the field when we dispatch them to Gaza" (AFP, January 8). The Mosque Youth Coordination Body claims to have recruited 3,500 volunteers to either fight or provide humanitarian assistance, though it estimates only half of these will actually go to Gaza (AFP, January 8).

Abu Bakar Bashir's Jamaah Anshoru Tauhid (JAT) movement expressed hope that Egypt would allow passage of mujahideen and medical teams through Rafah into Gaza (AFP, January 7). Bashir is the former spiritual leader of Indonesia's notorious Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist organization.

The Ansor Brigades paramilitary, belonging to Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, the Nahdlatul Ulama, is also training 78 volunteers for Gaza. Candidates need bring only a letter from their family and a health certificate. All expenses must be handled by the volunteer. Recruits are encouraged to develop spiritual powers that will allow them to fend off Israeli bullets and other weapons. The rival FPI eschews such traditional methods in their own training: "There is no immunity in the FPI. If we learn about such practices, how can we die a martyr?" Military strategy is taught to the Ansor recruits, but no weapons training is offered. The program has not been approved by Nahdlatul Ulama headquarters (*Tempo* [Jakarta], January 15).

Gaza's "Ghost" Suicide Bombers – More Rhetoric than Threat?

Recently, Islamic and jihadi internet forums circulated an article entitled "The Ghost suicide bombers. Who are they? And how do they spend their day?" (hanein.info, January 13). The posting, written by the Gaza correspondent for the influential Doha-based Islamonline website, included a short interview with the trainers of Hamas' suicide bombers (Islamonline.net, January 12).

Islamonline's correspondent, Muhammad al-Sawaf, said the suicide bombers, known as "Ghosts" to other Gaza militants, are the first line of defense in Gaza. They spend up to 48 hours at a time in ditches, reciting verses from the Quran while waiting for Israeli forces to pass by in order to blow them up. The bombers belong to the military wing of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam battalions of Hamas. Abu Moath, an al-Qassam leader supervising the suicide bombers, said the bombers are very determined individuals chosen carefully by Hamas: "They live like any other pious Palestinian youth. Some of them are university students that go about their lives without raising unwanted attention or bragging about their end mission. They go through a special faith program."

Since the start of the conflict in Gaza, the "ghost" suicide bombers have isolated themselves from families and friends. They spend their time hidden close to areas where Israeli forces deploy. On the selection criteria for suicide bombers, Abu Moath briefly explained that only young people are chosen from the ranks of al-Qassam's battalions, which number up to ten thousand fighters. Abu Moath disclosed females are also recruited to the ranks of the suicide bombers. The candidate bombers are secretly scrutinized by al-Qassam lieutenants to make sure they are religiously committed and responsible. The next phase is to notify the bomber of their acceptance and put them through psychological and military training on weapons and tactics, especially those used by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Abu Moath asserts that all through the selection and training phases the suicide bombers are tutored by religious clerics and Islamic preachers. Upon completion of training, the bombers are sent behind enemy lines. Each group of suicide bombers is compartmentalized and does not know the location or composition of other groups to avoid compromising their comrades if one of them is captured by the Israelis. Abu

Moath admits such captures happen very often because the suicide bombers operate behind enemy lines. Each suicide bomber is issued special weapons and a custom-tailored explosive belt.

Other Hamas units of suicide bombers include the “Booby-Trapped Martyrs.” These martyr units are designed to deploy on the streets and alleys of Gaza’s cities, armed with heavier explosive belts than those used by the “ghosts.” These units are as secret and compartmentalized as the “ghost” suicide bombers and deploy with Hamas commando units tasked with kidnapping Israeli soldiers.

Many forum chatters hailed and prayed for the “ghost” and “martyr” suicide bombers, posting comments such as: “It is only my lack of luck that I am not with them. I wish them all the best in this life and hereafter. May God give them steadfastness and determination, amen.”

In another interview by Islamonline correspondent al-Sawaf, al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida said Hamas fighters have surprised the Israeli forces with offensive attacks rather than the expected defensive operations. He said the suicide-bomber Mahmoud al-Rifi, whom he claimed stayed for days in a ditch on the al-Raes mountain west of Gaza city and blew up an Israeli commando unit, was one example of Hamas’ successful new guerilla warfare tactics. However, other sources said al-Rifi did not carry out a suicide attack; rather, he waited for Israeli forces in a ditch on the al-Raes mountain and attacked a detachment of Israeli commandos with a machine gun, killing two Israeli soldiers before being killed while trying to take a third injured soldier prisoner (muslm.net January 9).

According to earlier threats by Hamas leaders, Hamas is expected to resume suicide bombing attacks in Israeli cities in retaliation for the war on Gaza. Regardless of the Israeli wall built to prevent suicide bombers from entering Israel, Hamas leaders allege they have managed to infiltrate tens of their suicide bombers who are already in place in Israel and the West Bank awaiting orders (alrainews.com, December 22, 2008). Even though Hamas has enough experience and possible accomplices among Palestinians living in Israel to resume suicide attacks in Israeli cities, Israeli forces demonstrated their ability to prevent suicide attacks in the assault on Gaza.

The absence of successful suicide attacks on Israeli forces in the conflict is likely an indication of Hamas’ inability to recruit enough volunteers to perpetrate suicide bombings, regardless of whatever claims are made by the Hamas leadership.

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Al-Awda Party and the Ba’athist Dream of Return in Iraq

Iraq’s al-Awda party first emerged in the weeks following the demise of Saddam Hussein’s Ba’athist regime in 2003. Al-Awda means “the return” in Arabic, in this case the “return” of the Ba’athists. In those days, pro-Ba’athist graffiti appeared in some areas in Iraq, with slogans like “Saddam will be back,” and “Al-Awda party is coming.”

Though no clear identity emerged for this organization in Iraq’s post-war insurgency, the name “al-Awda” has been in the headlines lately, as the Iraqi government confirmed the arrest of 23 Iraqi officers from the Interior and Defense Ministries on suspicion of being members of the Ba’athist party (Al-Arabiya [Dubai], December 18, 2008; *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 19). The officers were said to be members of al-Awda and were conspiring to overthrow the Iraqi government. Two days later the men were freed because of a lack of evidence. Shortly afterwards, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki denied the existence of any coup attempt (Radio Sawa, December 21, 2008). The arrests took place while Minister of the Interior Jawad al-Bolani was out of Iraq. When he returned to the country, al-Bolani condemned the accusations against the arrested officers and denied any plot: “Some of the political parties did not like the success that the Ministry has achieved in minimizing their influence over the Ministry. The whole operation was due to political purposes. It was not about security” (al-Manar.com, December 20, 2008).

Al-Ba’ath is believed to have split into several different wings. The most active among those is led by Ezzat Ibrahim al-Douri, the former Iraqi vice-president and one of Saddam’s most trusted aides (this organization will be

referred to as al-Ba'ath in this article). Oddly, the name al-Awda has not appeared on the pro-Ba'ath websites. Al-Awda has also not been listed among the many insurgent groups that formed the Jihad and Liberation Front formed by al-Baath in 2007.

A spokesman of al-Ba'ath denied any involvement in the recent plot:

Al-Awda has been said to be the alternative [form] of al-Ba'ath; this is completely incorrect. Al-Ba'ath, with its cultural ideology and history of six decades of struggle does not need to change its name and come up with another name. All of the members of the party are proud of the name and ideology of al-Baath... Al-Baath's goal is to resist the occupiers [the Coalition forces] and drive them out of Iraq and emancipate the country from the occupiers and their subservient collaborators [the Iraqi government]. The party is not about to stage coups that help the occupiers' project (almansore.com, December 19, 2008).

The Iraqi constitution, ratified in October 2005, banned the Ba'ath party under any name. According to the Iraqi authorities, membership of al-Awda equals membership of al-Ba'ath - both are considered a crime (al-Jazeera, December 19, 2008).

The alleged plot in the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior was the biggest accusation against al-Awda but it was not the first. Over the last two years Iraqi security forces reported several raids on groups affiliated with al-Awda. In December 2006, the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior revealed it had discovered offers to join al-Awda had been extended to a number of senior Iraqi officials. The ministry said the party's agenda was to spread terror and destabilize the country (Kuwait News Agency, December 5, 2006).

A year later the Sunni tribal fighters of the Awakening ("al-Sahwa") councils of the al-Anbar province captured a group of al-Awda members. The group was reported to be linked to the smaller and lesser-known wing of al-Ba'ath led by Muhammad Younis al-Ahmad. Shaykh Khattab Ali Sulayman, the head of the local council of the city of al-Rumadi, told the Baghdad-based al-Sabaah newspaper:

The security forces [of al-Sahwa] arrested 27 members of a network, called the Grand al-Awda party, led by Muhammad Younis al-Ahmad. They are linked to the dissolved al-Baath party. They were captured with documents and lists of the party members. The security forces also captured statements related to the structure of the network... They are sponsored by leading figures of al-Ba'ath based in Syria. The most prominent figure of this organization is Muhammad Younis al-Ahmad. Some of the captured documents state that that man is leading the organization.

The head of the Sahwa intelligence in al-Anbar, Rashid Jubaiyer, indicated that al-Ahmad's group tried to contact police officers, urging them to abandon the force and embrace violence (*al-Sabaah*, December 2, 2007).

Unlike the main Ba'ath organization led by al-Douri, which issues statements frequently on the internet and has a spokesman, al-Ahmad's faction avoids the media. An Iraqi government source told al-Arabiya.net that "Al-Awda organization is a kind of al-Ba'ath formation under a new name. The group is active in southern Iraq, with new networking tactics such as individual contacts and clusters" (Al-Arabiya.net, January 22, 2008).

In his recent statement on the anniversary of the formation of the Iraqi Army (al-Basrah.net; January 8), al-Douri described a new initiative aimed at gaining more power and influence. Al-Douri called for the following:

- American President-elect Barack Obama must fulfill his promise and pull out the troops from Iraq.
- The insurgent groups must unite.
- Exiled Ba'athists must return to Iraq and join the struggle of their party.
- The members of Saddam's army who joined the new Iraqi army must return to al-Ba'ath. Al-Douri said his party would take the initiative and contact them.
- The members of the Iraqi parliament who voted against the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between Iraq and the United States should join al-Ba'ath.

- The members of the Sahwa movement should re-join the insurgency.

Al-Douri also seized the political moment in the wider Middle East, alleging that the Israeli attack on Gaza would not have taken place if Iraq had not been under occupation (albasrah.net, January 8, 2009).

Conclusion

The setback of al-Qaeda in Iraq at the hands of the Sunni tribal fighters in the Sahwa movement has not affected al-Ba'ath. The party's new approach is to entice more groups and individuals to join the movement. Defying Iranian influence in Iraq will always be an attractive propaganda theme al-Ba'ath will use, especially among the minority Sunnis. The main concern of Sunni society in Iraq (and even in the broader Arab region) is how to face the perceived Iranian influence over Iraq.

Surprisingly, the Ba'athists also appear to have been trying to gain some support among the Shi'a. Al-Douri's Jihad and Liberation Front, comprising nearly two dozen militias and insurgent groups, claims to have loyal members in Shiite southern Iraq. Followers of Muhammad Younis al-Ahmad are also believed to be active in that area. In August 2006, Iraqi police in the Shiite southern city of al-Omara announced that they had arrested three senior members of al-Ba'ath party on charges of re-organizing the party. According to the police, "The leader of the group had visited Syria and coordinated with members of al-Ba'ath to re-organize the party under the name of al-Awda" (elaph.com, August 16, 2006).

Iraqi government sources tend to link al-Awda organization to Mohammed Younis al-Ahmad's branch of al-Ba'ath. This branch is based in Syria and sponsored by the Syrian government. Although al-Douri's group has denied using the name of al-Awda, the concept of the return and the propaganda behind it are obviously welcomed by them. The denial came only lately and was specifically in response to charges of involvement in the recent alleged plot in the Ministry of the Interior. The Ba'athists' dream of a return to power is alive and they will continue working to achieve it. An article in the constitution banning al-Ba'ath and criminalizing its members will not stop them. The Iraqi government has a limited amount of time to prove

to its people that post-war Iraq has become or will soon be better than Saddam's Ba'athist regime. More must be done to integrate former Ba'athists who denounce violence - otherwise it will not be easy to rule out the threat of the Ba'athists and their dream of a return.

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Taliban Target Karachi and Peshawar Links in NATO's Afghanistan Supply-Chain

The announcement yesterday by General David Petraeus that the United States had reached agreements with Russia and several Central Asian nations for a new (and costly) U.S.-NATO supply route into Afghanistan came as the struggle for control of the supply routes through Pakistan continues. While Pakistan's military battles the Taliban to secure the Khyber Pass, a vital route for carrying U.S. and NATO supplies into Afghanistan, there are signs that the Taliban is not only continuing attacks on supply terminals in the North-West Frontier Province city of Peshawar, but now intends to choke off Coalition supplies at their offloading point in the harbor of Karachi. Roughly 75% of Coalition supplies run through Karachi to the Khyber Pass and on into Afghanistan, usually carried by private Pakistani transport contractors.

Following months of reports concerning the infiltration of Taliban militants in the port city of Karachi, Pakistani security forces encountered stiff resistance during a series of raids on Taliban safe-houses in the Sohrab Goth neighborhood of Karachi on January 15 (*Dawn* [Karachi], January 15). Two security men were killed and seven wounded as 79 suspects and a large number of modern weapons were seized. The militants were alleged to have been warning transportation firms not to take on loads destined for Coalition forces in Afghanistan. The suspects allegedly included members of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the banned Lashkar-e-Jhagvi. An Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) team and a detachment of the Anti-Violent Crime Unit (ACVU) participated in the raids as part of their search for a kidnapped Iranian commercial attaché. Over 100 mobile units of the police and the Sindh Rangers, a Karachi-based Interior Ministry paramilitary, also participated in the raids (*Daily Times*

[Lahore], January 16). According to Karachi police chief Wasim Ahmed, the suspects were “planning massive terrorist activities in the city” (Press Trust of India, January 16). Residents of the neighborhood described the suspects as innocent men who worked as mechanics and laborers (*Daily Times*, January 16).

TTP spokesman Maulvi Omar boasted of the Taliban presence in Karachi last summer:

We are very strong in Karachi; our network could come in action once the central Amir of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan [Baitullah Mahsud] ordered the Taliban for action. We want to help improve law and order and maintain peace in Karachi. The Taliban could surface in Karachi if foreign hands do not stop interfering in the city... We are capable of capturing any city of the country at any given time (Pakistan Press International, August 6, 2008; *Daily Times*, August 10, 2008).

At the other end of the supply route in the north-west frontier region, NATO supply terminals were left largely unguarded earlier this month when Frontier Corps paramilitary troops were withdrawn from the ring road where the terminals are located for duty in Peshawar. Taliban militants took advantage of the lack of security to fire six rockets into the Faisal and Khyber Ittifaq terminals in Peshawar, destroying a total of six containers. The attackers fled without known casualties after a short fire-fight with the remaining security personnel (*Daily Times*, January 13). The attacks were the first in Peshawar since a series of strikes in December killed three people and destroyed massive quantities of military equipment awaiting shipment through the Khyber Pass. The supply terminals consist largely of open fields and have no special defenses (for previous attempts to close the supply route, see *Terrorism Monitor*, January 9; *Terrorism Monitor*, May 29, 2008).

After the attack, Peshawar police began joint patrols with troopers from the Frontier Corps paramilitary, including checks on pedestrians and passing vehicles (Geo TV, January 14). A new security plan has been devised for protecting the 14 terminals on the Peshawar ring road. Over the next few weeks the United States is scheduled to supply Pakistan’s Frontier Police with large quantities of non-lethal security and transportation equipment (*The*

News [Islamabad], January 15). There are continuing reports that locally contracted owners of oil tankers are heeding the warnings from the Taliban while meeting their own needs by setting fire to their trucks to collect insurance provided by foreign companies (*Daily Afghanistan*, December 14, 2008). Other companies hauling supplies along the 30-mile highway between Peshawar and Torkham are beginning to decline loads, citing the risk to their drivers (AFP, December 31, 2008).

The supply route through the Khyber Pass was shut down on January 13 as Pakistani military forces expanded a two-week-old offensive against Taliban militants in the Landi Kotal and Jamrud subdivisions of the Khyber Tribal Agency. With the border post at Torkham closed, as well as the entire highway between Torkham and Peshawar, Pakistani troops searched for Taliban hideouts and demolished homes believed to shelter Taliban fighters (AFP, January 13). It was the second time this month the Peshawar-Torkham highway has been closed for security purposes.

A secondary supply route through southwest Pakistan 375 miles south of the Khyber Pass has only just been reopened after tribesmen built road-blocks to protest the killing of a local man in a drug raid. The route runs from Quetta (believed to be the home of the Afghan Taliban’s top leadership) to the border point at Spin Boldak. The blockade in the town of Qila Abdullah left hundreds of trucks stranded along the road for five days until government officials negotiated a removal of the blockade. The road was immediately closed again due to snow (AFP, January 14).

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Kashmir’s al-Badr Mujahideen Hard Hit by Indian Offensive

India’s military has intensified operations against the Pakistan-sponsored Kashmiri Mujahideen groups still active in Indian-administered Kashmir. In recent days, a top-ranking commander of the militant al-Badr movement, Abu Tamim, was killed in an encounter with

Indian security forces in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir (*Times of India*, [New Delhi], January 15). Indian officials announced that Abu Tamim, a Pakistani national (a.k.a. Sanaullah), was killed only days after the arrest of Mohammad Ahsan Dar, a top militant commander of Hizb ul-Mujahideen (HM) (*Kashmir Observer*, January 15). There were also reports that some top commanders of al-Badr, Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were hiding in fortified bunkers in the caves of Jammu and Kashmir (*The Hindu*, [New Delhi] January 5).

Al-Badr is the first jihadi organization to have introduced suicide attacks into the sub-continent. Though it ranks fourth after LeT, JeM, and HM in terms of strength and operational capability, its suicide squad has increased its capacity to carry out devastating terrorist attacks. Al-Badr has its headquarters in the Mansehra district of the North-West Frontier Province, with Pashtuns making up the largest part of al-Badr (Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies [New Delhi], November 6, 2006). Al Badr aims to “liberate” the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir and merge it into Pakistan. It was banned by the government of India on April 1, 2002, and is also designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the United States. Al-Badr was an active participant in the Indo-Pakistani Kargil war of 1999.

Since 1989, Kashmir has seen a growing, and often violent, Muslim separatist movement against Indian rule. Al-Badr is one such group with close links to other Kashmiri separatists and Islamist movements, including the LeT, accused of massive terrorist attacks in Mumbai last year. There are a number of signs indicating the two groups often work in tandem. In two separate incidents last year, Indian police arrested individuals belonging to al-Badr and LeT who were on joint missions in Kupwara district. Similarly, in 2005 two militants were killed during an encounter that ensued after security forces launched a raid on a terrorist hideout where ten cadres of al-Badr, LeT, and JeM were holding a meeting in the Bandipore area of Baramulla district (South Asia Terrorism Portal, India).

In their battle against the Kashmir militants, Indian security forces have targeted leading militants over the last year. In gunbattles in the Shopian district of the Indian-administered Kashmir, Indian police killed six militants and two soldiers (*The Hindu*, January 21, 2008; Press Trust of India, January 21, 2008). During one week

in April, Indian security forces killed two leading Hizb ul-Mujahideen commanders in the Anantnag district of south Kashmir and arrested five leading members of the group, including commander and IED expert Rayees Ahmad Dar and Junaid ul-Islam, who is believed to have also taken part in the Afghan war and was a spokesman for Hizb-ul-Mujahideen for some 15 years (*Times of India*, April 3, 2008)

The LeT was also a target of Indian security forces last year, though this did not seem to affect the group’s ability to plan and stage a major terrorist operation. The Indian army killed four militants of LeT in a fierce gun battle with militants in Baramulla and Hundwara districts. The militants were identified as Abu Khalid (a.k.a. Abdullah), Abu Mujahid, Usma Nhai, and Abu Jibrán. The Indian military revealed that Usma was an important militant and the District Commander of the LeT in Northern Kashmir (*The Hindu*, June 2, 2008). In another offensive against militants in several places in Srinagar, Indian forces killed some eight militants belonging to LeT. Indian forces claimed to have recovered a huge cache of ammunition from their possession (BBC, June 22, 2008). A further nine LeT militants were killed trying to infiltrate Indian Kashmir in September (OutlookIndia.com, September 1, 2008).

Despite the peace efforts and diplomatic initiatives between Pakistan and India in recent years, there has been no end in sight to the insurgency in Indian-administered Kashmir. Some jihadi groups want a totally independent State of the Jammu and Kashmir while others demand its merger with Pakistan. Since 1989, over a dozen jihadi groups have joined the fighting in Kashmir, which has left tens of thousands of people dead. The two nuclear-armed rivals – Pakistan and India - have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir since gaining independence in 1947.

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