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### Nizam, la Tanzim (System, not Organization): Do Organizations Matter in Terrorism Today? A Study of the November 2008 Mumbai Attacks

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# ***Nizam, la Tanzim* (System, not Organization): Do Organizations Matter in Terrorism Today? A Study of the November 2008 Mumbai Attacks**

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*The decline of the terrorist organization and the phenomenon of “homegrown” or “leaderless” jihad have led to the perception that the terrorist threat has moved from commander-cadre organizations to diffused networks or cells and individuals. However, using the November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, this article demonstrates that organizations do matter in terrorism. In other words, to produce successful and high impact attacks, terrorists do need some form of organization. Even leaderless jihad is not truly leaderless or devoid of some form of organization as the proponents of this concept claim. Moreover, even as the environmental entropy—reduction in the capacity of the environment to support an organization—has become distinctly pronounced in respect of terrorism, some groups did not have to make the same tradeoff as others due to their favorable position vis-a-vis the state they operate in. Therefore, these groups are capable of producing attacks of high operational sophistication with (a) strong organization and (b) state support to maintain that organization.*

Do organizations matter in terrorism today? The post-9/11 decapitation strategies including the killing and capture of key terrorist leaders, destruction of bases and training camps, have prompted the perception that the terrorist universe has become disaggregated and diffused without any formal structure and command and control systems. This perception is further reinforced by the emergence of what is known as “home grown *jihadists*,” unattached and mostly self-initiated and self-trained entities, who are nevertheless agitated by the ideology of global *jihad* and prepared to unleash violence in the name of the religion. The decline of the terrorist organization and the phenomenon of “leaderless *jihad*” have led some analysts to conclude that the terrorist threat has moved from commander–cadre

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organizations to diffused networks or cells that are self-sufficient and mostly autonomous in their operations. Moreover, the amorphous nature of these entities makes it quite difficult for law enforcement detection and preemption.

There is little argument that many countries in the world now face a serious threat from the phenomenon of homegrown *jihadism*. But this is not a substitute to the threats from organized groups. It is also not entirely correct to say that the homegrown *jihadism* or the leaderless *jihad* is the outcome of organizational decline affecting the terrorist groups. Using the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai in India, this article will demonstrate that organizations do matter in terrorism. In other words, to produce successful and high impact attacks, terrorists do need some form of organization. Even leaderless *jihad* is not truly leaderless or devoid of some form of organization as the proponents of this concept claim. Moreover, even as the overall security environment has become extremely hostile for terrorists to maintain an organization in a physical space, some groups have managed to continue to operate with impunity with the support of state sponsors or their agents.

### **The Debate: *Nizam, la Tanzim* (System, not Organization)**

In 2002, Mustafa bin Abd al-Qadir Setmariam Nasar, better known as Mustafa al-Suri, produced a 1,600-page document *The Call to Global Islamic Resistance* based on his more than 20 years' of militant combat experience. In the book, al-Suri captured the essence of "jihad of individual terrorism," as the new template for the *jihadists* to survive and operate in the much less permissive security environment of the post-September 2001 era. One of the most significant observations of al-Suri was that in the new security environment, it is no longer possible to maintain a presence in an identifiable physical space such as was the case in Afghanistan prior to September 2001. Al-Suri also recognized that hierarchical structures are easy prey to detection as discovery of one member would reveal the entire structure including its leadership.<sup>1</sup> Al-Suri understood that training in the open or warfare from fixed bases is no longer a viable option. Although training could take place in "open fronts" where there are ongoing conflicts, such as in Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq and Afghanistan, such opportunities evaporate when the fighting stops.

Accordingly, al-Suri prescribed a system—a model or a framework (*Nizam*)—in the place of organization (*Tanzim*) to induce survivability and innovation into the *jihadist* movement. Al-Suri's *Nizam, la Tanzim* (System, not Organization)<sup>2</sup> is the paradigm of extreme decentralization at the expense of organizational hierarchy.<sup>3</sup> According to al-Suri, those wishing to participate in the *jihad* can do so either on their own, or with a small group of trusted associates operating completely independent of any centralized organization.<sup>3</sup> As there is no discernable organizational hierarchy the onus of command and control falls upon each operative or the cell leader.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, as the battlefield disperses and the organizational links are blurred, the logistical procurement process begins and ends with the individual *jihadis*. This would require a high degree of ability on the part of the fighters to live off the land and the enemy.<sup>5</sup> However, according to al-Suri, corps of roaming *jihadists* would provide money and expertise to compensate for loss of organizational support.<sup>6</sup>

The *jihadist* movement caught up to al-Suri's concepts quite quickly, which was reinforced by other *jihadi* strategists. In a statement explaining Al Qaeda's combat doctrine, Abu Ubeid Al-Qurashi, one of Osama bin Laden's closest aides, reaffirmed that, "[t]he time has come for the Islamic movements facing a general crusader offensive to internalize the rules of fourth-generation warfare. They must consolidate appropriate strategic thought, and make appropriate military preparations."<sup>7</sup> Al-Qurashi also claimed that "[t]his new type of war presents significant difficulties for the Western war machine," because "it is

very difficult to launch a successful preventive strike at an organization that maneuvers and moves quickly, and has no permanent bases.”<sup>8</sup>

### Decline or Adaptation?

These developments have profoundly influenced the understanding of the terrorist threat in the post–September 2001 era. The decline of the organization has now become a major discourse in terrorism studies, reinforced by law enforcement accounts of successive attritions against hierarchically organized groups like Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) among others and their leadership. This received a further boost from the emergence of what is being labeled as “homegrown *jihadism*” or “leaderless *jihad*,” which approximated the “system” (*Nizam*) that al-Suri propounded. According to some scholars, groups like Al Qaeda have ceased to exist as centralized entities. They no longer control vast resources, run training camps, nor are in a position to direct operations.<sup>9</sup> According to Marc Sageman for example, Al Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden (Al Qaeda Central) has receded in importance and the killing and capture of its core leaders has operationally neutralized the group. Al Qaeda, Sageman asserts, is no longer an organization and nothing more than a social network that merely inspires rather than drives the global (*Salafi*) *jihad*.<sup>10</sup> The terrorist universe, according to this analysis, has become disaggregated and terrorism has become largely self-initiated in terms of training, target selection, timing of the attacks, and the choice of tactics.<sup>11</sup>

A number of attacks and attempts in recent years have been attributed to this type of new terrorism. Analysts found striking similarity between self-recruited leaderless *jihad* and locally initiated recruitment for the March 2004 Madrid and July 2005 London bombings. In both the cases, the perpetrators set up their own local cells, and trained in “secret houses, apartments or gyms.”<sup>12</sup> A number of other attacks including “Operation Crevice” foiled in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States have also been attributed to informal networks without any links to established groups or formal training infrastructure.<sup>13</sup> A more direct link to al-Suri’s concept was made to Operation Praline, a foiled attempt in the United Kingdom, spearheaded by Younis Tsouli, the infamous online *jihadist* Irhabi007 (terrorist007) and Aabid Khan. Common to all these incidents is the fact that the concerned individuals did not belong to an established organization (i.e., Al Qaeda). Although there is no evidence of direct influence of al-Suri, for many analysts, the actions of these individuals offer a good framework with which to consider current and future international *jihadist* threat.<sup>14</sup>

However, the aforementioned developments have not brought about a total demise of the terrorist organization or a need for the same in terrorism. Arguably, larger groups can no longer operate as effectively as they had in the past, since they are increasingly vulnerable to disruption and attrition. The demise of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka in 2009 made it amply clear that it is difficult for a militant group to exist and operate in a physical space and more so if it controls territory. Many other groups have lost their organizational structures, training facilities, and financial support due to sustained law enforcement action.

But the impact of decapitation strategy has not been uniform in respect of all groups. Some groups have bounced back with renewed structures and strategies like Al Qaeda in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan.<sup>15</sup> Others continue to thrive, exploiting the ambivalence of host governments that are willing to make distinctions between terrorism and what they consider legitimate struggle for self-determination. In fact, the groups that have managed to maintain some form of structure are the ones that are:

1. Operating in the lawless regions or ungoverned territories like FATA in Pakistan,
2. In cease-fire and negotiation with the government (the Moro Islamic Liberation Front—MILF in the Philippines), or
3. Recipient of support, active or passive, of the host governments or state sponsors.

It is in the context of the third category that this article examines the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai. This is to explain how the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), the group being held responsible for the carnage, was able to operate with considerable freedom to plan and carry out the attacks. There are of course a number of other incidents that suggest high levels of planning and organization. These include the July 2005 attacks in London, 2006 “Liquid Plot”—attempts to blow up airliners taking off from Heathrow airport—and Operation Crevice, which involved a plan to conduct attacks using fertilizers (both in the United Kingdom). The perpetrators in these incidents would not have achieved the same sophistication without external direction from more established groups in Pakistan and a network (organization) to get them there. In all the cases training in Pakistan was the most common and vital element, the one that directly linked these attacks to Al Qaeda. Also, contrary to initial assessments, these people were part of an extensive network that existed even before the September 2001 attacks.<sup>16</sup> The same could be said about the July 2009 attacks in Jakarta, the abortive attack in the Northwest Airlines Flight 253, or even the killing of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operatives in Afghanistan in December 2009.<sup>17</sup> In almost all cases, organization and leadership were evident both at the strategic and operational level.

The November 2008 attacks in Mumbai were exemplar of a spectacular terrorist operation. The attack’s success was a reflection of precise planning, detailed reconnaissance, and thorough preparations and flawless execution. The attacks involved almost all the tactics in terrorists’ tradecraft—coordinated shootings, armed assaults, drive-by shootings, arson, beheading and murder, combined with bombings and hostage-taking. Terrorists carried out multiple simultaneous attacks at different locations to cause confusion and to overload the Indian security forces’ ability to react effectively.<sup>18</sup> The operation displayed a proficiency in advanced combat techniques including intelligence collection/knowledge of terrain and target, speed of execution/surprise, weapons precision/proficiency, and fields of fire, control of terrain, and rapid neutralization and/or separation of targets. In short, it was a complex multipart operation that suggests unequivocal planning and organization. Additionally, it demonstrated how passive state support could enable a violent group to maintain capability and resilience even though the broader environment has become more and more hostile for these groups to retain formal organizational structures. In other words, attacks such as in Mumbai in November 2008 would not have been possible without (a) a strong organization and (b) state support that enabled the group to weather the post-9/11 storm and retain a robust organization.

In this context, it is necessary to revisit the literature on state sponsorship of terrorism.

### **State Sponsorship vis-à-vis Capability and Resilience**

In recent times the use of the phrase “state sponsorship” has become *passé* except perhaps in respect of countries allegedly (mostly determined by the United States) providing support for acts of international terrorism.<sup>19</sup> However, throughout the Cold War era, competing states used terrorism as a deliberate instrument of foreign policy and as a cost-effective means for launching covert and potentially risk-free warfare against each other. For the major powers such as the United States, the Soviet Union, and France, the use of armed

groups as “surrogate warriors,” was like the pursuit of politics or diplomacy “by other means.”<sup>20</sup> It was also one way of avoiding direct military conflict, which had the potential to escalate into a nuclear confrontation. As a result, both the superpowers funded and trained diverse secret groups to fight the Cold War at the periphery—El Salvador, Cuba, and Afghanistan among others.<sup>21</sup> Many others, such as the French, provided support to groups as a means of confronting insurgency, dissent, and subversion.<sup>22</sup> Oil-rich countries and several other small powers like Saudi Arabia, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, North Korea, and Cuba also supported diverse terrorist organizations throughout the Cold War.

Often the state support was the result of the prevailing ambivalence about the general issue of terrorism in which terrorists were seen as freedom fighters. States also supported terrorists operating in neighboring countries to generate geopolitical pressure.<sup>23</sup> The LTTE in Sri Lanka received substantial backing from India until 1987; Pakistan funded a large number of groups in their fight against India on Kashmir; and Algeria played a major role in sustaining the activities of Polisario Front in Western Sahara in its struggles against Morocco during the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>24</sup> While Syria funded organizations such as Hezbollah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command (PFLP—GC) and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Lebanon supported numerous groups including Hezbollah, to counterbalance U.S. influence in the Middle East.<sup>25</sup>

For the state sponsor, much as for the group itself, terrorism is not a mindless act of fanatical or indiscriminate violence, but a purposefully targeted and deliberately calibrated method of pursuing specific political objectives at acceptable costs.

The relationship between the state sponsor and the terrorist groups could be different depending on the objectives and the priorities of both the parties concerned. Often, the state sponsor exercises some control over the groups it sponsors and directs their activities. Sometimes, the groups and their state sponsor share a common enemy and common objective. Occasionally, terrorists are simply the covert arms of the state, carrying out actions at its behest.

Edward F. Mickolus lists degrees of government support/involvement toward terrorists in five categories in a “rough order of culpability/evil”:

- Intimidated governments;
- Ideologically supportive regimes;
- Generally facilitative supporters;
- Direct support in incidents;
- Official participation.<sup>26</sup>

Irrespective of the types of involvement and underlying motivation, in most cases the state supports the actions of terrorists with finance, logistics, training facilities, and safe haven, either in the open or behind a faced of deniability. This becomes more problematic when the regime in question displays pronounced empathy with the cause and the ideology of the terrorists concerned.<sup>27</sup>

In any case, state sponsorship makes terrorists more efficient and effective and more lethal.<sup>28</sup> For example, it was only after the CIA began to provide substantial covert support that the Afghanistan fighters could gain real momentum and military credibility vis-à-vis the Soviet army.<sup>29</sup> Pakistan’s financial and other logistical support to the Taliban leaders, amounting to millions of dollars, enabled the Taliban to exhibit a swift and effective style of warfare and helped them gain and consolidate their hold on Afghanistan in the late 1990s.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, India’s sponsorship was crucial for building the LTTE’s capability to engage the Sri Lankan military decisively.<sup>31</sup> In the end, lack of such support to LTTE from India was

one of the causes for its total annihilation in 2009 at the hands of the Sri Lankan military. Hezbollah uses the Iranian support both to maintain its military capabilities and to create a vast socioeconomic network for its supporters.<sup>32</sup>

Since the late 1990s, there has been a decline of state sponsorship of terrorism. The end of the Cold War and the superpower rivalry reduced the incentive for most states to fund proxies in pursuing geopolitical goals. There is also lesser support for terrorism and its sponsors in the international arena.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, some groups continue to be supported in terms of money, equipment, and training by sympathetic states. The nature and the scale of support, however, have changed significantly and it has become more discrete or passive.<sup>34</sup> In many cases, the concerned governments let the groups to operate with impunity. Ironically, many of these state sponsors cooperate, albeit fitfully, with the U.S.-led “war on terrorism even as they surreptitiously allow terrorists to operate from their soil.”<sup>35</sup> Often, groups exploit the ambivalence of the passive sponsors and quasi-independent parts of governments (the Inter Services Intelligence of Pakistan for example) that may act without authorization from concerned governments. Also important is the support provided by non-state actors “acting as a component of the state or without the state’s opposition.” Passive sponsorship, Daniel Byman asserts, has now become an increasingly important category of support.<sup>36</sup>

There is now ample evidence that, despite bans, the LeT as well as its parent organization, Jammāt-ud-Dawā (JuD), have managed to continue do business as usual. This was evident in the attacks in Mumbai in November 2008. Given LeT’s relationship with the Pakistani state, which enables the group to maintain a robust organization, the decision to conduct attacks in India would appear almost inevitable. There is also speculation that the attacks could have been instigated or encouraged by sections of the Pakistani military or intelligence services to force a change in Pakistan’s role in the U.S.-led War on Terror.<sup>37</sup>

### The November 2008 Mumbai Attacks

The Mumbai attackers came by sea, sailing from Karachi in Pakistan. Between 26 November and 29 November 2008, the 10 terrorists attacked 10 targets in the city of Mumbai. It took the Indian security forces almost 60 hours to overcome the terrorists and secure the locations, especially the hotels (Taj Palace and Oberoi Trident) and the Jewish Centre in the Nariman House, where the terrorists fought a prolonged and pitched battle with the commandos of the Indian National Security Guards (NSG). In all 166 people including 26 foreign nationals were killed and about 304 were injured in the attacks. From the terrorists’ perspective, it was a successful operation albeit the capture of the sole surviving terrorist Mohammad Ajmal Amir Kasab. It was Kasab who implicated *LeT, the Pakistan-based group, as the one responsible for the attacks.*<sup>38</sup> This has now been further reinforced by the admission by David Coleman Headley, a LeT operative of U.S. nationality, before the court. Headley pleaded guilty to scouting targets for the attacks in Mumbai on behalf of the LeT.<sup>39</sup> After a spate of denials, Pakistan has also admitted that the attacks were carried out by individuals who belong to LeT.<sup>40</sup>

The Mumbai attacks have had multiple, far-ranging effects on India, Pakistan, and the international community. The focused attacks on foreigners guaranteed international media coverage, while the attack at the train station was aimed at killing ordinary Indian citizens with impunity. In addition, the attacks increased tensions between India and Pakistan, which was most likely one of terrorists’ strategic objectives. The impact of the attacks was not

confined to Mumbai or India alone; it reverberated throughout the world because of what terrorism experts believe are its copy-cat effects.<sup>41</sup>

Well-planned deadly attacks such as the one in Mumbai on November 2008 against specific targets are not conducted on the spur of the moment at a cost of mere pennies. The prolonged nature of the operation that enabled the terrorists to engage in a sustained slaughter is novel and unprecedented. As evident from the confession of Kasab and facts gathered by the investigators, the attacks in Mumbai involved a long period of planning, an extensive and comprehensive training regimen, provision of equipment, arms and ammunitions, food and other materials as well as a fairly sophisticated communication system. Eyewitness accounts indicate that the terrorists knew the precise location of the targets and were familiar with the layout of the buildings they attacked including hidden doors and escape routes.<sup>42</sup> This would indicate that the perpetrators spent much time and resources in building detailed and up-to-date profiles of the targeted locations. Similarly, the terrorists who carried out the attacks on the ground were well trained and well equipped. The equipments with which they attacked different locations in the city were the best that money could buy. Each terrorist was equipped with appropriate arms and sufficient ammunitions for a prolonged fight. They also possessed mobile phones and satellite phones to communicate with their remote handlers. They used global positioning system (GPS) equipment both at sea and on the land to reach their target locations without any difficulties.<sup>43</sup>

### **Planning and Preparation**

There is no definite information about when the decision to attack specific locations in Mumbai was made. But from Kasab's account, this must have taken place before December 2007, when Kasab was recruited and sent for training along with his other accomplices. According to some estimates, based on the time-line of other large-scale attacks, the planning for Mumbai could have begun in mid-2007.<sup>44</sup> The planning and preparation of the attacks involved extensive pre-attack reconnaissance and surveillance of the targets. This was to prepare as comprehensive dossiers on the targets as possible so that the terrorists who carried out the attacks could reach their assigned locations and commandeer the targets without much difficulty. This was of crucial importance since both the planners and executioners were in Pakistan and needed to be briefed extensively about the targets.

A number of people were involved in the planning and execution of the attack. According to the information compiled by the investigators, a total of 32 persons were recruited and trained for the operation, of which 10 were finally selected for carrying out the attacks in Mumbai. Besides the foot soldiers, there were a total of about 35 persons who were involved in the development of the attacks, training and provision of equipments, and other logistics.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, a few other Pakistani nationals were involved in making arrangements for communication and financing.

An operation of this magnitude could not have been successfully carried out without some support from the ground. Contrary to initial claims by different agencies, a number of Indian nationals were also involved in various stages of the operation. One of the most important local contributions was the complete dossier of the targets of the attacks. This was done by two Indian nationals affiliated to LeT—Fahim Arshad Mohammad Yusuf Ansari and Sabauddin Ahmed Shabbir Ahmed Shaikh. Other Indian nationals—Tauseef Rahman and Mukhtar Ahmed—were also instrumental in arranging fake identity cards for the actual perpetrators and SIM cards for the mobile phones used by the terrorists.

## Recruitment and Training

Kasab's own account indicates a particular pattern in the recruitment process that involved the promise of monetary compensation besides spiritual rewards that the perpetrators believed they would get if they die during the operation. Most of the recruits, like Kasab, came from a poor background—typical school dropouts without jobs and with family responsibilities. An odd-job worker earning a pittance, Kasab ran away from home after a fight with his father, went into small crimes, and moved on to join LeT.<sup>46</sup>

Training is a key component of any well-planned terrorist attack and, in respect of the attacks in Mumbai, was vital for the successful execution of the operation. The familiarity of the target sites and dexterity in the handling of sophisticated weaponry and electronic equipments conclusively point to extensive trainings conducted by professionals for the militants. It is estimated that trainers were very competent and experienced, particularly in urban warfare. Moreover, for the persons to carry out an attack for 60 continuous hours would require them to be in good physical condition and mental readiness. This would suggest that they were well disciplined, and had extensive combat stress and sleep deprivation training.<sup>47</sup> The fact that the terrorists came by boat traversing a distance of about 582 nautical miles would indicate training in maritime logistics and navigation techniques. They also demonstrated expertise in electronics and usage of other advanced technology. They navigated from Karachi to Mumbai using GPS equipment. They carried satellite phones, compact discs with high-resolution satellite images such as Google Earth maps, and had multiple cell phones with interchangeable SIM cards. They were also proficient in the use of explosives and use of small arms/automatic weapons, grenades that suggested combat "CQB" (Closed Quarters Battle) training.<sup>48</sup> Imparting this training not only entails high levels of expertise on the part of the trainers, but also requires sophisticated facilities, equipment, and logistics.

According to Kasab, the training for the attack took place from December 2007 to November 2008 in different training camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir.<sup>49</sup> The training was rigorous, arduous, and disciplined and not something that was put in place on an ad hoc basis. On a graduating scale, the trainings were held at Muridke (Karachi), Manshera (North Western Frontier Province—NWFP), Muzaffarabad (Pakistan Administered Kashmir), Azizabad (Near Karachi), and Paanch Teni (Patyani Creek, located near Thattha district of Sindh).<sup>50</sup> The training camp at Muridke is one of the oldest and most important as it was at the location of LeT's headquarters. In all these camps, militants were trained for physical fitness, swimming, weapon handling, tradecraft, battle inoculation, guerrilla warfare, firing sophisticated assault weapons, use of hand grenades and rocket launchers, handling of GPS and satellite phone, map reading, and other analytical skills. In addition, they were ideologically indoctrinated in the tenets of *jihād* and the recitation of Quran and Hadis. A number of highly skilled and battle hardened trainers were involved notably, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, Abu Fahadullah, Abu Mufti Saeed, Abu Abdurrehman, Abu Maavia, Abu Anis, Abu Bashir, Abu Hanila Pathan, Abu Saria, Abu Sif-ur-Rehman, Abu Imran, Hakim Saheb, abuKaahfa, and Abu Hamza. The spiritual and religious training would have been given by Hafiz Saeed, the Emir of LeT, as claimed by Kasab in his confession to the Mumbai police.<sup>51</sup> Few of these individuals are now implicated, both by India and Pakistan, for overall leadership—planning and offering operational instructions for the successful execution of the attacks.

The training schedule was extensive, rigorous, and specific to the nature of the operations to be carried out. The result of this training was that, despite heavy odds, the terrorists could carry out their attacks precisely the way the entire operation was planned.

## **Equipment**

The Mumbai terrorists were very well equipped for a sustained and long firefight with the security forces. According to the list compiled by the police, terrorists were equipped with fire arms, ammunition, explosives, and communication devices as well as toiletries, medical kit, food, and clothing items and fuel. Police also recovered an inflatable dinghy with a Yamaha outboard motor that the terrorist used to land on the coast.<sup>52</sup>

## **Communication**

During the entire operation, the terrorists made use of mobile phones to make and receive calls. These calls were made for seeking instructions from and giving on the spot account of the attacks to the masterminds in Pakistan. Investigations further revealed that the phone numbers were connected to an account created with CallPhonex, a VoIP (voice over internet protocol) service provider based in New Jersey in the United States. It further transpired that on 20 and 21 October 2008, an individual identifying himself as Kharak Singh, indicated that he was a VoIP reseller located in India and was interested in establishing an account with CallPhonex.<sup>53</sup>

Two payments were made to CallPhonex on Kharak Singh's account. On 27 October 2008, an initial payment in the amount of \$250.00 was made. The sender used Money Gram agent Paracha International Exchange located in Lahore. On 25 November 2008, a second payment of \$229.00 was made to CallPhonex via Western Union Money Transfer. The sender used the outlet agent Madina Trading, located in Brescia, Italy, to make the payment to CallPhonex. These outlets were owned by an individual named Mohammed Yaqub Janjua. Janjua had been running the outlet for more than 10 years. He is a Pakistani citizen from a town outside the capital Islamabad.<sup>54</sup>

## **Financing of the Attack**

Although precise details are not available, investigations revealed that money for this attack could have come from multiple sources and in different ways. These include individual donors, charities/institutions, and money spent by some of the supporters from their own pocket and from criminal means.

## **The Masterminds**

It is now evident that the operation was planned and executed by LeT, a group that is based in Pakistan. Following the Mumbai attacks, the government of Pakistan proscribed Jamaat ud-Dawa (JuD) of which LeT is the militant offshoot. JuD leader, Hafiz Saeed was arrested and kept in house detention, although he was released subsequently on the orders of a court that did not find sufficient evidence to link him directly to the attacks. However, other senior members of LeT—Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, Mohammad Ashraf and Mahmoud Mohammad Ahmed Bahaziq—were arrested and cases have been filled against them in connection with the November 2008 attacks. Zaki-Ur-Rehman Lakhvi is listed by Pakistan as LeT's chief of anti-India operations and the mastermind of the November 2008 attacks, Mohammed Ashraf as the group's chief of finance whereas Mahmoud Mohammed Bahaziq, a Saudi national who served as the leader of LeT in Saudi Arabia, is listed as a senior financier. In addition the Pakistani government has arrested and prosecuting Hammad Amin Sadiq who facilitated funds and safe houses for the attacks; Abdul Wajid a.k.a. Zarrar

Shah identified as the facilitator and expert of computer networks; Shahid Jamil Riaz who paid for the hire of “Al Hussaini” in which the terrorists came from Karachi to the Indian waters. The government of Pakistan has also declared a number of persons as “proclaimed offenders” including Iftikar Ali, who made the deposit to obtain VoIP connections.<sup>55</sup>

### **Institutional Support for the Mumbai Attacks**

There was also evidence of facilitation by certain institutions and establishments in Pakistan. For example, the hand-grenades that were used by the terrorists in Mumbai attacks were manufactured by Arges, an Austrian company. Inquires have revealed that Arges had given a franchise to manufacture hand-grenades to a Pakistan Ordnance Factory located near Rawalpindi. Similar, hand-grenades were used in the serial blasts in Mumbai in March 1993 and during the attacks against the Parliament House in New Delhi in December 2001. The 9 mm pistols that were recovered from different crime scenes in Mumbai bore the marking of “Diamond Nedi Frontier Arms Company, Peshawar,” which is located in Pakistan. Indian police also named Colonel R. Sadatullah of the Pakistani army’s Special Communications Organisation (SCO) as part of the plan to carry out the attacks. It is also believed that the pseudo name “Major General Sahab” that featured in the taped conversation between the gunmen and their handlers could be of Major General Muhammad Khalid Rao, who was the general manager of the SCO.<sup>56</sup>

The initial reaction of Pakistan for the involvement of its citizens in the attacks was one of denial. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, Islamabad offered to send the chief of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) to India, which, however, was promptly withdrawn. When Kasab claimed Pakistani citizenship and requested consular access, Pakistani officials refused to acknowledge the claim. However, after protracted diplomatic haggling, exchange of dossiers and under sustained pressure from Washington, Islamabad, in January 2010, officially acknowledged that there is “sufficient incriminating evidence” against LeT and the seven persons it arrested in connection with the Mumbai attacks.<sup>57</sup>

This leads to the question how, despite the ban, LeT could organize, plan, and execute an attack of such a magnitude and operational sophistication? According to some analysts, among all the groups in Pakistan, LeT has the most extensive organization and network. Considering the overall hostile environment against the groups, it would not have been possible for LeT to maintain such an organization without some form of state support. Assessments about Pakistan’s role varies—from it being the “world’s most active sponsor of terrorist groups”<sup>58</sup> to being a passive supporter. In the past the U.S. State Department came very close to designate Islamabad as the “state sponsor of terrorism.”<sup>59</sup> This sponsorship involves “actively backing some groups, maintaining contacts with others, turning a blind eye to yet more groups, and in some cases lacking the capacity” to take out those that appear hostile to its interests.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, support for terrorism in Pakistan is a broad-based activity, involving an array of government and non-state actors.<sup>61</sup> As put by Robert Wirshing, Pakistan’s patronage has exerted “a powerful influence on the rise and fall in fortunes of practically every militant group active there.”<sup>62</sup> The fact that terrorists from all over the world continue to travel to Pakistan for instruction and indoctrination purposes, suggests existence of clear organized command and control and leadership structures that are capable of planning sophisticated operations and providing for necessary training and logistics to execute the same. It is difficult to believe that such structures could exist without the knowledge, tolerance, or indifference of the government.

Pakistan’s support for groups fighting to wrest Kashmir from India’s control—LeT, Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), and Harkat ul- Mujahideen (HuM) among others—has always

been most vocal and often been projected as an official policy. As Sumit Ganguly puts it, the sponsorship of the groups fighting for Kashmir has provided an excellent opportunity to Pakistan to “impose significant material and other costs” on India at little cost to itself.<sup>63</sup> This support encompasses provision of arms and ammunitions, training, and funding. It is also widely believed that Pakistani intelligence agencies at times help groups select targets and often know about major attacks before they were carried out.<sup>64</sup> Although many groups act autonomously, their actions were usually blessed by the government and the military and often carried out with the knowledge and active cooperation of the Pakistani Army, ISI, and other key elements in the civilian administration in Pakistan.<sup>65</sup>

### **LeT: Business as Usual**

Among the groups, LeT has always been in the front as a recipient of Islamabad’s largesse particularly through the ISI.<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, LeT’s agenda is not confined to the liberation of Kashmir from Indian rule alone. As outlined in a pamphlet titled “Why are we waging Jihad?” LeT is fighting for the restoration of Islamic rule over all parts of India including Kashmir, Hyderabad (in Andhra Pradesh), Assam, Bihar, and Junargarh (in Gujarat). Although the group also has a pan-Islamic *jihadist* agenda, India remains its primary enemy.<sup>67</sup> LeT has also been a vital component of Islamabad’s anti-India strategy based on the notion that non-state actors could be used to achieve limited objectives in an asymmetric conflict.<sup>68</sup> LeT became particularly a favorite as it could extend its activities beyond the Kashmir theater thanks mostly to its networking with groups like the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and the infamous crime syndicate of Dawood Ibrahim.

Successive Pakistani regimes have either been unwilling or unable to rein in the group even though on a number of occasions Islamabad has shown a façade of activities by proscribing the group or arresting its senior leadership. However, even behind these actions, Islamabad’s game plan has only been too apparent as follow up actions were either never initiated or botched up if taken. As a result, the group continues to operate with the same organization despite proscriptions. For example, post November 2008, even as the main offices of the JuD have been seized by the government and its bank accounts frozen, nothing much has changed in respect of group’s activities. As a JuD office-bearer claimed, “Our offices are closed but our members are active in their respective areas.”<sup>69</sup> Its leaders who were arrested were released by the courts due to “insufficient evidence.” There is however considerable skepticism as to whether evidences were simply not there or not made available during the court proceedings.

Although New Delhi has repeatedly asked its Pakistani counterpart to identify and take action against all those linked to the Mumbai attacks, Pakistan keeps dragging its feet in respect of JUD leader Hafiz Saeed.<sup>70</sup> In February 2010, Saeed addressed a number of rallies in various cities of Pakistan with his organization openly defying the government ban. In one of the rallies JuD cadres waved Klashnikovs and shouted anti-India slogans, as Saeed told his supporters that *jihad* is the only option against India and that one Mumbai attack was not enough.<sup>71</sup> It is difficult to believe that Saeed’s renewed anti-India activities were possible without the acquiescence of the Pakistani military and intelligence establishment.

Similarly, taking advantage of Islamabad’s soft stance against JuD, speakers at a conference on Kashmir, notably United Jihad Council (UJC—a conglomerate of groups fighting against India on Kashmir issue) chairman Syed Salahuddin (also the leader of HuM) rejected Indian allegations about the involvement of JuD and LeT in the Mumbai attacks and urged the Pakistan government to end the ban on JuD and release its leader Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi. Also present in the conference was Hamid Gul, a former director of ISI.

Although the event was organized by the little known Tehrik Azadi-i-Jammu Kashmir, in effect the show was orchestrated by JuD.<sup>72</sup> Earlier, on 24 November 2009, JuD spokesman Abdullah Muntazir claimed that the LeT had opened several new training camps in Pakistan Administered Kashmir which is in the knowledge of the government. According to Muntazir, “the LeT cadres are seen as a kind of civil defense force in the event of a war with India and going after the group could create a new enemy when Pakistan is concentrating on defeating the menace of Taliban.”<sup>73</sup> The sheer openness and public display of violent rhetoric are indicative of the fact that the Pakistani government continues to turn a blind eye to or could even be supporting the activities of LeT on its soil.

### Conclusion: Organization Matters

Thus, the evidence and analysis of the planning and preparation, recruitment and training, and financing of the Mumbai attack demonstrate a very high degree of operational sophistication, which is a hallmark of LeT’s organizational strength. This has also exposed how LeT has managed to maintain a robust organization because of passive state support, which translates into official empathy with group’s cause and/or using LeT’s organization and network to put pressure on India on longstanding bilateral issues including that of Kashmir.

There is little doubt that threats from terrorism are here to stay; it is the type of the threat and nature of the terrorist organization and support structures that is debatable.<sup>74</sup> But this should not lead one to infer that the threat from organized groups is over. It is almost impossible to build a sustained and resilient movement without some form of structure and leadership at some point. As discussed earlier, in respect of Madrid and London attacks and the foiled Liquid Plot, the local operatives reached out to established groups and experienced leaders for guidance and support. Even al-Suri recognized the importance of organized structures and leadership. According to him, the loss of training camps in Afghanistan was too high a price to pay for an attack (on 11 September 2001) that did not fully paralyze the United States. Al-Suri also recognized that despite dispersal of the battlefield, the “international jihad needs its figureheads” and needs to be “directed” through strategic guidance and “invested” with “a state of general unity”—in other words, be credited to an organized group.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, lack of organization and training and guidance from experienced leaders could lead to law enforcement infiltration and monitoring resulting in a high rate of attrition and foiled attempts.

It has long been recognized that terrorists would always value organizational survival over ideological or programmatic achievements.<sup>76</sup> Even as the environmental entropy—reduction in the capacity of the environment to support an organization—has become distinctly pronounced overall, LeT did not have to make the same tradeoff as others due to its favorable position vis-à-vis Islamabad and/or its institutions.<sup>77</sup> This is what the international community needs to be mindful about to prevent large-scale and complex operations like the September 2001 or November 2008 attacks.

### Notes

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