

SOCIAL RESEARCH REPORTS

ISSN: 2066-6861 (print), ISSN: 2067-5941 (electronic)

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Social Research Reports, 2013, vol. 25, pp. 63 - 89

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SOUTH ASIA'S FUTURE SECURITY: THE DANGER OF TERRORISM FROM PAKISTAN

Saroj Kumar RATH¹

Abstract

Within a year of the Mumbai attacks by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the public outrage that many thought would usher in a political groundswell for a firmer government response, has dissipated. Almost all the political officials who resigned as a result of the attacks either back in their old jobs or promoted to other plumb posts. After a brief hiatus, bombings by LeT and/or its affiliates resumed in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Pune, Varanasi, Hyderabad, Gaya, Patna and Srinagar killing 100 people in mainland India and around 1000 in Jammu and Kashmir since Mumbai attacks. India has done little of the painful public soul-searching that followed the September 11 attacks on the United States. After the Mumbai attacks, while the US government has commissioned atleast a dozen of official studies on LeT, India government commission none. This article argues while the LeT is gradually growing from strength to strength by encompassing the role of a political pressure group under the guise of *Difa-e-Pakistan*, India is blind to the danger unfolding in its western neighbour.

Keywords: Lashkar-e-Taiba; Difa-e-Pakistan; South Asia; Terrorism; Future Security.

The Gathering Cloud

On May 10, 2011, exactly a week after the US Navy SEAL killed Osama bin Laden in a raid on a compound near Pakistan's top army training school Kakul Academy in Abbottabad, the US Joint Chief of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen received an unsigned, undated secret memo from Pakistan. Hussain Haqqani,

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then Pakistani Ambassador sent the memo through the secret intermediaries of US businessman Mansoor Ijaz to Adm. Mullen after the alleged approval of President Asif Ali Zardari. Mansoor Says Mullen Wanted Zardari's clearance of memo (*The News*, 2011). Admiral Mullen's office confirmed the receiving of the one page secret memo with the heading, 'Briefing For Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman, Joint Chiefs Of Staff' (*The News*, 2011) The document, which sought Adm. Mullen's intervention in the affair of Pakistan, reveals interesting facts about Mumbai terror attack. The memo indicated that the Zardari government suspected active involvement of the shadowy S-Wing of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) in the Mumbai attack and expressed helplessness in bringing the perpetrators into justice (Ijaz, 2011).

The text of the secret memo was self-explanatory. The civilian leadership requested Adm. Mullen's 'direct intervention in conveying a strong, urgent and direct message to (army chief) Gen Kayani that delivers Washington's demand for him and (ISI chief) Gen Pasha to end their brinkmanship aimed at bringing down the civilian apparatus'. Admitting the role of ISI in the Mumbai attack and proposing a new national security team the memo said, 'We are prepared to cooperate fully under the new national security team's guidance with the Indian government on bringing all perpetrators of Pakistani origin to account for the 2008 Mumbai attacks, whether outside government or inside any part of the government, including its intelligence agencies' (Ijaz, Op Cit). The civilian government was even prepared to hand 'over those against whom sufficient evidence exists of guilt to the Indian security services'.

The matter famous as *Memogate* affair has rocked Pakistan in October 2011 and forced Ambassador Hussain Haqqani to resign from his post. Earlier, Pakistan government has admitted the role of LeT and Pakistani citizen in the Mumbai attacks (Rath, 2010: 360). The secret memo is the first official admission by Pakistan about the involvement of ISI in the Mumbai conspiracy. Not only this, the memo is a rare glimpse into the inner sanctum of the S-Wing of the ISI, whose relations with the LeT is robust. Despite international pressure and Pakistan's own promise to end state tie with the LeT, the ISI has been hobnobbing with militant groups. India's Post-Mumbai diplomacy and security initiatives could not restrict bombings in the country. The S-Wing of ISI has been responsible for many attacks, which is said to be dedicated to promoting the dubious agenda of a narrow group of nationalists who believe only they can protect Pakistan's territorial integrity (Ijaz, 2011:10). This is a sign of ongoing as well as impending danger of ISI-LeT sponsored terrorism against India. The S-Wing provides military support and intelligence logistics to groups like the LeT as the ISI embodies the scourge of radicalism that has become a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy (Ijaz, 2011:10). This article would analyze the threat of LeT towards India. What are the LeT's objectives today, and how are they likely to achieve them? What role would the ISI play? How will the LeT work with other groups? And what is likely to be the international pressure on LeT? Answers to these questions are vital for the future security of South Asia.

The availability of literature on LeT is abundant, most of them explaining the historical journey of the group and a few at best describing the ideological

orientation of LeT. Immediately after the 26/11 attack, the US despatched a team under the leadership of New York Police Commissioner Mr. Raymond Kelly and Under Secretary of Department of Homeland Security Mr. Charles Allen to analyze and provide information on the attack (Allen, 2009). Since then the US government has commissioned dozens of study to analyze the potential danger of LeT to the US homeland and US ‘interest’ abroad (Kronstadt, 2008; Fair, 2011; Petreaus, 2010; US Select Committee on Intelligence, 2010; Blair, 2010; Fair, 2009; Tellis, 2010; Weinbaum, 2010). The US government also invited Congressional hearings on this subject from senior defence officials and intelligence personnel. With the submission of dozens of research studies on LeT to the US government and with its subsequent media coverage, there was a flooding of research materials on the threat assessment of LeT. Interestingly, all the studies were meant to assess LeT’s potential to harm US ‘interest’ inside and outside America. The mandate of the research studies, as it were all commissioned by the US Government were to assess LeT’s capabilities to harm US interest. After the US, almost all leading governments and universities of repute of the world commissioned study on the Mumbai attack and LeT with the same perspective – what would be the future potential of LeT to harm ‘Western Interest’ (Balachandran, 2009; S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2009)? Since LeT never attack any Pakistani interest, there is no such study required or available in Pakistan, which discuss LeT’s potential to harm Pakistan in future. Curiously despite the fact that India is the primary target of LeT, government of India neither employed nor produced any futuristic study on LeT. India’s intelligentsia is almost silent on this vital subject. There were a few studies conducted by indian thinktanks after the Mumbai attack but those were mostly visual spectacles and copy paste job (Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, 2008; Overseas Research Foundation, 2008; Ghosh, 2008). Whatever little futuristic studies available in India about LeT are only in the domain of newspapers and print periodical magazines. The Indian media has done a commendable job on this subject not only because of their access to information but also because of their commitment to undertake futuristic study on LeT (India Today).

Till the time the article is completed, LeT has never attack any US target on the US soil. The paintball jihadi, where LeT trained terrorists supposed to attack US target, never succeeded (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2003). Outside the US, LeT never conducted an exclusive attack on any US interest and wherever there was some report of LeT’s participation in any attack against US target, the role of LeT was fiduciary in nature (Buzby, 2008). Despite its anger, the group refrained from attacking US interests in the Asian continent (Blair, 2010). The US views the LeT through the prism of al Qaeda and hence paranoid with the very thought of a repetition of 9/11 (BBC World News, 2013; Dawn, 2011; Fair, 2011).

Contrary to the US paranoia, India has been continuously under attack from the LeT. Since 1990, nearly 95% of LeT operations were directed against India. LeT participated in few attacks outside India. The number of LeT attacks are found in the South Asia Terrorism Portal (<http://www.satp.org>). As per the South Asia Terrorism Portal, which list chronologically the attack conducted by the LeT, there were dozens of LeT attack on India since November 2008 (South Asian

Terrorism Portal, 2012). The most significant terrorist attacks carried out either by the LeT or its proxy since November 2008 were Pune bombing of February 2010, Zaverly Bazaar (Mumbai) bombing of July 2011 and Delhi High Court bombing of September 2011 (National Investigation Agency, 2010). In January 2010, a Mumbai like attack was replicated in Srinagar's Punjab Hotel, where LeT terrorists had holed up and taking constant instruction from their handlers in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) during the siege. 'Their communication with their handlers revealed that more attacks are in offing' (Pandit, 2010: 1). These attacks are the testimony of the growing capacity and commitment of LeT to orchestrate deadly terror strike against India. The Lal Chowk siege prompted union home minister P. Chidambaram to admit the fact that 'the country, especially Jammu and Kashmir, remains vulnerable to militant attacks sponsored by forces from across the border (Chidambaram, 2010)'.

LeT: Stretching the Target Area in India

LeT with its multiple attacks on India in general and with its Mumbai attacks in particular brought India to its knee (Bansal, 2009; Barad, 2003; Singh, 2009). Normally terror organization expires after a decade of lifespan but the LeT is thriving even after 25 years (Rapoport, 1992: 1067; Hutchison & Malley, 2007). LeT's recruitment process, support base, penetration in the Pakistani society, ideology and operationalization in and out of Pakistan has dwarfed the functioning of all other terrorist organizations in the country. The organization has evolved from an obscure entity in late 1980s to the most powerful and dangerous terrorist organization of the world today (Fair, 2009). The LeT leadership understand the fact that since it is neither the first nor the only client of the ISI, LeT's importance and significance in the eyes of the ISI is relative to its strength and capability (Rashid, 2008). In its long history of existence, the LeT has never targeted the Pakistani state or any target (international or otherwise) within Pakistan (Lieven, 2011: 154; Fair, 2011). The inquiry into the questions why and when, by whom and for what purpose Markaz Dawa-ul-Irshad (MDI), the parent body of LeT was established could be divided into two sections. The first section deal with the early days of LeT primarily in Afghanistan and its growth in Pakistan; and the second section deal with the LeT's patronization by ISI and the emergence and development of LeT as the prime proxy force of Pakistan against India. The name MDI and LeT is used interchangeably for the convenience of the understanding of the readers. The origin and initial functioning of LeT was happened under normal circumstance. The only exception was that international Islamist jihadist had also aided to the emergence of LeT. The ISI had no direct influence on the LeT during its origin and early days (Yousuf, 2007: 105). To understand the rise and growth of LeT and its relationship with the ISI, a threadbare examination of LeT's early days is essential.

During the Afghan War 1979-89, Pakistan was virtually converted into an outpost for recruitment of Mujahideen and gateway to participate in the Afghan struggle (Coll, 2004:79). People of all hues, mostly madrassas product, left

Pakistan to join their brethren in Afghanistan. The future leaders of MDI also left Pakistan on various occasions. There is no verifiable source available to pin point the exact date of their departure or their activities in Afghanistan. Praveen Swami of *The Hindu*, in an article claimed that Zaki-ur Rehman, the chief commander of LeT left Pakistan in 1982 and he was a student of the Jamia Mohammadia seminary in Gujranwala (Swami, 2009: 12). However, India's home ministry record and Interpol record do not agree with this assertion and Pakistani court materials contended that he does not have any formal education. Interpol record trace his origin to Barahkoh, P.O. DO, Tehsil and District Islamabad, Pakistan and Chak No. 18/IL, Rinala Khurd, Tehsil Rinala Khurd, District Okara, Pakistan. His date of birth is December 30, 1960. He left for Afghanistan in his 20s and joined the myriad groups of mujahideen to fight against Soviet troops. Since ISI was funding only seven Afghan groups and volunteer had to register themselves under one or other banner, between August 1987 and January 1990, Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi oversee mujahideen operations at the Kabul frontline and kept in communication with both Arab and local mujahideen units based in nearby Nurestan (Taiba Bulletin, 2001).

It is unclear when the *Amir* (chief) of LeT Prof. Hafiz Muhammad Sayeed and chief ideologue of LeT Prof. Zafar Iqbal, the other two founders of MDI reached Afghanistan. However, US government records says, both Sayeed and Iqbal were professor at the University of Engineering and Technology in Lahore in 1986, when they founded the MDI (Clinton, 2009). Hafiz Sayeed joined University of Engineering and Technology in Lahore in 1974 and resigned in 2005 (Mir, 2002: 59). This is an indication of the fact that the duo used to share their time in between Lahore and Afghanistan during the mid-1980s when MDI came into being. The LeT website states that 'During the Afghan Jihad the youth of a rather battered Muslim Ummah took part to please Allah. In 1986 Markaz-al-Dawa-Wal-Irshad was established to organize the Pakistanis participating in Afghan Jihad, on one platform'. The statement is issued by LeT's Taiba Bulletin, Taiba Bulein is an official publication of LeT, P.O. Box 259-Flat no.9, 1st floor, Trade centre, 180 Multan Road, Lahore, Pakistan. Consequentially, a group of Pakistani Muslim militants decided to 'take a leaf from the book of the Afghans and lit the torch of jihad movement' (LeT websites, 2011; Sikand, 2011: 218-229). This new movement, which became eventually known as LeT, was comprised of both intellectuals and military commanders. There are conflicting accounts on the origin of MDI as the information available about this group is mostly contradicting. Some sources, quoting MDI websites are of the view that the MDI had 17 original founders. However, there is no mention of names other than Hafiz Mohammad Sayeed, Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi, and Zafar Iqbal. Some names related to Hafiz Sayeed's family are found as founding members but it is not possible on the part of Sayeed to have son, son-in-laws and other offshoot to staff the MDI when he himself was 35 years in 1986. Sayeed was born in 1950 and was 36 years in 1986. 36 members of his family were allegedly killed during the partition of India-Pakistan and he was alone from his family who survived (Amir, 2002:59).

The MDI or LeT was one of the many small and obscure organizations, which came into existence during the Afghan war with the explicit intention to oppose the Soviet Russia in Afghanistan. During the Afghan War, the ISI never considered LeT as one of the serious players and the group did not receive any direct cooperation from the ISI. The LeT claims that some 1600 of its trainees participated in the Afghan war but only five were martyred. However, it was found that this is a dubious claim of the LeT web made in 1999. Claims like this made the other claims of the website doubtful (Taiba Bulletin, www.dawacenter.com/magazines/voiceofislam/sept99/jihad.html). Most of the LeT's cadres including Zaki-ur Rehman were fighting under Abdur Rab Rasul Sayyaf's Ittehad-e-Islami, which was recognized by the ISI and receiving funding, arms and guidance from the ISI (Yousuf and Adkin, 2007:109). During the Afghan war, LeT and its cadres were mostly foot soldiers and contributing to the efforts of the seven ISI recognized mujahideen groups in Afghanistan.

The meeting of the three key figures of the group in Afghanistan proved productive for the formation of the MDI. Sayeed, who obtained his Master in Arabic Language from the Jamia Malik Saud (King Saud University) in Riyadh, managed to convince his former colleagues back in Saudi Arabia for funding. Zafar Iqbal provided the much-needed ideological support while Zaki-ur Rehman commanded himself to look into the military affair of the organization. Scores of Pakistani mujahideen were taking part in the Afghan war against the Soviet Union without any proper Pakistani leadership. The ISI was also not inclined to fund any Pakistani militant organizations at the outset as the ISI leadership had made it clear to the mujahideen that 'to receive the ISI largesse, groups or individuals have to align themselves with any of the seven ISI recognized Afghan parties'. The ISI provided guns and ammunition to the seven parties housed in Peshawar and recognized by the ISI ((Yousuf, Op Cit: 101, 104)). But ISI, which was acting as the bank window of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was not the only sponsor of Afghan war. Under an agreement in between the Saudi Royal family and President Ronald Reagan, Saudi Arabia agreed to match the CIA's aid dollar for dollar (Coll, 2004: 66). Saudi Arabia was sponsoring of the Afghan war and funding from the Saudi royal family and wealthy private individuals was going to a myriad group of mujahideen(Yousuf, Op Cit: 83-84). Although the LeT was at a nascent stage and far less powerful to claim official funding and support from the ISI, the organization was eligible for private Saudi funding to run its daily affair.

In 1987, LeT established two training camps in Afghanistan. The first one was the Muaskar-e-Taiba at Jaji in Paktia Province and the second one was the Muaskar-e-Aqsa in Kunar Province. During this time, their third training camp known as Camp Tango training facility was established in Kunar province of Afghanistan. Soon, according to later accounts published by LeT, the volunteers who were trained at Camp Tango under the supervision of Zaki-ur Rehman and Hafiz Mohammed Sayeed were fighting at different fronts (Taiba Bulletin, 2001). The

formal establishment of MDI occurred in 1986 and after that, efforts were commenced by the eager supporters of MDI to establish a parallel military wing. Accounts vary on the year of formation of Lashkar-e-Taiba, the military arm of MDI. There are conflicting accounts on the date of the formation. Some sources said it was formed in 1990 but this does not stand academic scrutiny as by this time, the organization had already in possession of three military camps in Afghanistan. Also during the Afghan war, preaching was not possible in a war-ravaged Afghanistan and hence the very motto of MDI as described by some scholars as preaching is questioned. The MDI was functioning as a militant organization since its inception and Sayeed received funding and guidance from Abdullah Azzam, the mentor of Osama bin Laden for the establishment of the organization. Pakistani authors believe MDI was funded and supported by Azzam (Abbas, 2005: 210; Shafqat, 2002: 141). Dr. Abdullah Azzam, who was affiliated with the Islamic University of Islamabad and the Maktab-ul-Khadamat, helped organizing the MDI. Sayeed formally established the LeT in 1989 but it was only a change of nomenclature as the fate of MDI was closely associated with LeT before 1989 (Abbas, 2005: 210).

The illusory success of jihad in Afghanistan encouraged each of the actors involved in the war to believe that the same could be replicated elsewhere successfully (Hussain, 2007: 54). After returning from the successful Afghanistan operation, LeT consolidated its position for a couple of years in Pakistan before registering its presence at the Indian side of Kashmir. The ISI and LeT, separately wanted to replicate their Afghan successes in Kashmir immediately after the departure of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The ISI quickly backed Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) for the Kashmir insurgency before shifting support to the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Harkar-ul-Muhahideen, Harkat-ul-Ansar, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islamic and others (Blank, 2003:191). However, after a few years of experiment, ISI started sending combat-hardened aliens into India in order to sustain a large-scale campaign of murder and mayhem intended to bring New Delhi to its knees (Tellis, 2010). The earliest contact of ISI with LeT was not before 1993 as the LeT registered its presence in Kashmir during this time. Till mid-1993, ISI was focusing primarily on indigenous disgruntled groups of Kashmir to create unrest in Kashmir.

Benazir Bhutto provided some explanation on ISI's support to LeT. She recall that, 'Musharraf told me he wanted to 'unleash the forces of fundamentalism' to ramp up the war' against India in Kashmir. Bhutto gives Musharraf the go-ahead, as she had lost power once before by opposing the Pakistani military and ISI, and as she recollect, 'Second time around I did not want to rock the boat'. Musharraf approaches several Islamic organizations and commits them to supply volunteers who could be trained to fight as guerrillas in Kashmir. One group he works with was MDI (Levy and Scott-Clark, 2007: 239-43). The earliest LeT presence in India was detected in 1993 when a cohort of the group's Punjabi cadres crossed the LoC into Jammu and Kashmir. Its presence was publicly recognized by early 1996 — a full six years after the local Kashmiri resistance burst forth — when a group of LeT terrorists massacred sixteen Hindus at Barshalla, about 30 kms from

Doda district in Kashmir. The ISI did not support LeT during the period of 1989 till 1993. However, LeT was eager to receive support from the ISI and the organization was independently participating in Kashmir insurgency. Explaining his aim in 1999 Hafiz Sayeed said, 'About 15 years ago, people might have found it ridiculous if someone had told them about the disintegration of the USSR. Today, I announce the break-up of India, Insha-Allah. We will not rest until the whole India is dissolved into Pakistan (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2003:3-4).'

Since 1993, literally hundreds of terrorist attacks involving LeT militants have occurred throughout India. The first spectacular attack of LeT in Kashmir was recorded in 1999 when its cadre attacked a Border Security Force post in Kashmir. The guerrilla group's daring attack on December 23, 2000 on New Delhi's historic Red Fort – a landmark that houses both soldiers and civilians and draws thousands of tourists every day – brought the group to the limelight in South Asia. The group claimed that the Red Fort attack was their first operation against an Indian military installation inside India (CNN, 2000). The December 13, 2001 terrorist attack on India's Parliament while it was in session and July 2006 Mumbai local train bombing were among the most devastating of attacks carried out by the LeT. The parliament attack was a joint exercise of LeT and JeM (Advani, 2001). The LeT's most outrageous and ghastly attack till date was the November 26, 2008 Mumbai attacks. Since the Mumbai attacks LeT's global image as a hardened terrorist organization has been enhanced significantly.

After the completion of Afghan War in 1989, when LeT shifted its base from Paktia to Muridke, India became the prime target of the group. While the primary area of operations of the LeT is Jammu and Kashmir, the outfit has carried out attacks in other parts of India, including in New Delhi, Pune, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Varanasi, Kolkata and Ahmedabad. For the India centric threat assessment of LeT it is necessary to measure and calculate the capacity and strength of LeT. The LeT adhere to the Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought, which is basically followed by a miniscule number of people (around 4%) in Pakistan. Independent and non-verifiable sources claim that Barelvis 48%, Deobandis 25%, Ithna Ashari 19%, Ahl-e-Hadith 4%, Islamilis 1% and Bohras .25% (Gupta, 2006:172). There is no official estimation about the number of followers of various sects like Berelvi, Deobandi, Ahl-e-Hadith and Shia in Pakistan as they could only be differentiated by virtue of their tradition of veneration of saints and their shrines. Official Census only covers religion not sub-sect in the religion (Government of Pakistan, 2011). Even the mandate of Census 2011 does not cover enumeration of sect under religion (Population Census Organization, 2012). General Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization policy of 1980s delegated contradictory shares of madrassas to various religious sects. Since Zia-era while 64 percent of the total seminaries are run by Deobandis; the Barelvis and Ahl-e-Hadith controls 25 percent and 6 percent respectively. A mere 3 percent of madrassas are owned by various Shiite organizations (Gupta, 2006: 172; Hasnat, 2011:129).

However, these religious segmentation does not dictate the choice of leaders or cadres to join a militant organization. For example none of the Mumbai attackers were Ahl-e-Hadith followers. During their preliminary training all of them were

converted into Ahl-e-Hadith. LeT terrorist Ajmal Kasab said, ‘ In the training of ‘Daura-e-Sufa’, 30 more boys were there along with us. In the 29 days training, first they converted us from Sunni into Ahale-Hadis and we were taught the customs of Hadis’ (Kasab, 2009: 13). LeT terrorists David Coleman Headley, the linchpin of Mumbai conspiracy and Tahawwur Hussain Rana, the financier of Mumbai attack were of *Takfiri* background. *Takfiri* means the act of declaring a non-practicing Muslim an apostate (Shahzad, 2011 pp-XVI). Similarly, LeT trainers Major Abdur Rehman Hashim, and Captain Khurram adhere to *Takfiri* ideology (National Investigation Agency, 2010: 100). Another LeT leader Major Haroon was a Salafi. The religious inclination of Col. Shah, Major Iqbal, Major Sameer Ali and Major Ali, the ISI officers who had all facilitated LeT’s Mumbai attack is not known, but based on the interrogation report of Ajmal Kasab and David Headley, they all probably belonged to Deobandi brand of Islam. The profile of most of the LeT militants of India are either Deobandi or Bareilvi (Swami, 2007: 196). The participation of myriad groups of people in LeT operations indicates the fact that LeT possess the tremendous capacity to gather people from diverse Islamic sects under one banner to wage war against India. It is believed that the membership of LeT extends to about 150,000 people. The confession of Kasab made clear that LeT has the capacity to quickly and inexpensively train young men from villages into intensely driven, proficient killers (Perlez, and Masood, 2009).

During the long duration of its existence and despite the ban of the group by leading countries since 2001, LeT’s capacity and strength seen gradual increase and there is no sign of reduction of its capacity in the immediate future. Considering this trend, the groups terror attack against India would continue in the coming years. Immediately after the Mumbai attack, Hafiz Sayeed and Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi were arrested while other leaders of the LeT went underground or remained at large. Even when both the senior leaders of LeT were inside the bar, Sajid Majid, the other ring leader of Mumbai conspiracy ‘got clearance from LeT high-command to launch attack against India (National Investigation Agency, 2010:102).’ On June 2, 2009, the Lahore High Court struck down the house arrest order of Hafiz Sayeed and LeT resumed low intensity fringe attack in Jammu and Kashmir. On January 13, 2009, two hardcore militants of the LeT and two Police personnel were killed during an encounter at Lallu Khetar in the Kalakote area of Rajouri District.

The training camps of LeT are found across PoK, Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and FATA in Pakistan (Kasab, 2009; National Investigation Agency, 2010) and Nuristan, Kunar and Pakitia in Afghanistan (Dorrnsoro, 2011; Bhattacharyya, 2010; Rubin, 2010; Strategic Discourse, 2010). Many of these training camps in Pakistan are allegedly near army’s cantonment area (MacDonald, 2011). So it is evident that these infrastructure would not be divested in the near future no matter what would be the international pressure. LeT have high speed recreational boats, scuba diving equipment and water scooters at their disposal. The group has been

regularly offering maritime training to its cadres at its Muridke camp, at Mangla Dam and at Neelum River. Conducted by after a maritime entry into the city, the Mumbai attack was considered as LeT's most successful operation ever. The group would not repeat another maritime entry into Mumbai. David Headley told his interrogators that Sajid Majid had informed him that the next attack would not be in Mumbai but other cities (National Investigation Agency, 2010:101). Considering the group's maritime capacity there is every possibility that Chennai or Kolkata would be the next target! In that case, the LeT militants would not start their journey from Karachi but either from Jaffna (Sri Lanka) or Chittagong (Bangladesh). There is already report of LeT and LTTE connection. Bangladesh has long been acting as the transit route for LeT (*Asian Tribune*, 2008). The US Pacific Command has already gathered intelligence about LeT's influence in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (Willard, 2010: pp-19).

LeT possesses legendary networking in India. The group is in possession of well-knit like-minded people and groups in J&K, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka. LeT's activities in these states are often carried out by its support network in the concern province. How the group manage to align with indogenous terrorist groups and how the group's reach in India has been so vast and so expansive? The merger of Dawood Ibrahim's gang with the LeT at the behest of ISI had significantly expanded LeT's reach in the country. 'Many members of Dawood's gang have been indoctrinated and trained in the use of weapons in the Bahawalpur centre of the LeT near Lahore' (Balakrishnan, 2008:14). The ISI had roped in the Dawood Company in LeT activities because 'The underworld's penetration in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu is very deep. By synergizing the Dawood gang with the LeT, the ISI's reach has increased manifold.' The LeT has collaborated successfully with groups like Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and Indian Mujahideen (IM). The SIMI activists were gun for hire for long and LeT developed links with the SIMI to unsettle India. The deep penetration of the LeT inside the hinterland of India was because of its collaboration with SIMI and D-Company (*Economic Times*, 2008). The IM is also aligned with LeT on case to case basis and hence increasing LeT's reach in India (Swami, 2009).

LeT's calibrated collaboration with various Indian groups has increased its capability to strike India even during increased vigilant time. It is near impossible to tame LeT activities in India without disciplining the indogenous groups. In future, LeT would certainly work to empower and energize these indogenous groups and the vulnerability of India would increase. To reduce the risk of LeT's collaborative attack on Indian soil, Indian agencies would require to do the profiling of local groups and increase intelligence interception to track if any freelancer is ever collaborating with the LeT.

Difa-e-Pakistan: An India Centric Threat

In Pakistan, LeT has taken a gigantic shape to which even elected government shudder to disturb. High ranking Indian officials admitted the fact that President Zardari and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani had been confronting difficulty in dealing with Punjab-based groups like LeT (Mulford, 2009). India's worry was that the civilian government was incapable of taking action against LeT and the military had not yet made the strategic shift required to do so. During the Kargil War, LeT militants fought along with their army counterpart at the mountains of Kashmir (Roggio, 2009). Immediately after the Kargil defeat, LeT organized a mass rally where Hafiz Sayeed addressed the gathering and said, 'We will not rest until the whole of India is dissolved into Pakistan'. He assured the audience that LeT would continue sending militants into India and 'Allah will save them from the fires of hell and huge palaces in paradise awaited those martyred by infidel enemies (Mulford, 2006).' There was no demoralizing effect of Kargil defeat on the LeT as the organization promised to send mujahideen into India. Probably this was the reason why Pakistan army paid wages to LeT and sustained the organization (Mulford, 2009). The Army-LeT nexus is especially important as after September 11 attacks most of the militant groups of Pakistan have turned their guns inward and attacked Pakistani interest. LeT is the only group, which has not only refrained from attacking Pakistani interests but also it discouraged other groups too. Due to its pro-Pakistan ideology and policies, it has deep roots in Pakistani society and military establishment. The robustness of the alliance could be measured from the fact that Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi was still directing LeT operations from custody inside the Adiala Jail. According to a US memo sent to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and National Security Council, Gen. Kayani rejected US request that authorities should take away the cell phone Lakhvi was using in Adiala jail (Rotella, 2011).

What is more significant is Jamaat-ud Dawa (JuD); one of the aliases of LeT is no more a banned organization in Pakistan. On November 5, 2011, the interior ministry of Pakistan released a list of 31 banned organizations. LeT is on the list but its changed name – Jamaat-ud Dawa is missing (Khan, 2011: 10). With renewed support pouring from every conceivable source, LeT is operating with impeccable immunity and posing greater threat to India than ever. Indian army has acquired credible intelligence that the 'LeT is imparting training to 21 selected female terrorists and named the new organization as Dukhtareen-e-Taiba. They are undergoing the training at one of its 42 active training facilities in Muzaffarabad in PoK for carrying out terrorist activities in India (*Times of India*, 2012)'. The raising of the female terror group was brainchild of Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi. During the years 2009-2012, security agencies have arrested number of female terrorists in J&K. The female terrorists are instrumental in sending LeT's messages to its operatives and useful in transporting arms and ammunitions to the LeT cadres. They are employed by the LeT to accompany male LeT terrorists by way of camouflaging as their wives, which make the travel

of LeT terrorist easy (Sethu, 2012). The group is improvising its skill, performance and adapting to the changing security circumstance with clinical proficiency. With easy and uninterrupted flow of funding (from Saudi Arabia and ISI), cadres (from Pakistan), weapons and operational guidance (from army and ISI) the group is the ‘civilian extension of Pakistan army (Shahzad, 2011:86)’, which is consistently on war with India. The LeT is spreading its tentacles with surprising ease. India not only require a superbly vigilant intelligence and quick reaction team but also it is indispensable for the country to pre-empt such future threat.

The LeT leadership is frank in its appearance in Pakistan and consider its activities as equivalent to that of any political party. After the ban of LeT by the government of Pakistan its spokesman Yahya Mujahid said, ‘Work is not stopped by banning organisations. When our leader calls, hundreds of thousands of people gather. We are not a terrorist organisation but like any other party. We have no fighting wing, only political ambitions and support for the Kashmir cause (Lamb, 2003).’ Sayeed make fiery speeches and touches existing political issues of Pakistan. In a speech Sayeed said ‘Allah has told us to make atom bombs. America is telling us not to. Who should we listen to, oh Muslims, Allah or America?’ A taped speech of Hafiz Sayeed played on Kashmir Day, at the Jamia Mosque Ghousia, Rawalpindi, February 5, 2002. Immediately after his release in June 2009, Sayeed made his public appearance more frequent and took part in political rally including campaign against the Pakistani government’s move to repeal the country’s controversial blasphemy law (*Times of India*, 2010). By the time 2011-12, LeT able to work as a political pressure group in a number of areas in central and northern Punjab. Although it openly denounces democracy but covertly, it supports candidates of its choice. Hafiz Sayeed openly denounced Pakistan’s decision to give India the Most Favored Nation trading status. Sayeed warned that ‘LeT will surround the markets where Indian goods are sold’ (Tanvir, 2011). Sayeed vowed that jihad to oust Indian forces from Kashmir would continue. The meeting where Sayeed speaking was significant. The gathering under the banner of ‘Difa-i-Pakistan Conference’ was attended by thousands of supporters of Barelvi and Deobandi parties. The recognition of LeT by Barelvi and Deobandi parties and acceptance of its leaders is an indication of future danger. In the coming days LeT would not miss to take centre-stage in Pakistan politics as well and pose danger to the security of India.

The New Objectives

As of 2012, the objective of LeT has taken a giant shape. The usual LeT rhetoric that ‘The Jihad is not about Kashmir only, it encompasses all of India including Junagarh, Mavadar (Mavadar is a mistake on the part of FBI and it is probably Malavar as there is no place called Mavadar in India), and Hyderabad etc’. (Sayeed, 1999: 3). still dominating its agenda but over the years the group’s objective has taken new dimension. The alignment of the group with ‘Karachi

Project’ in 2003 and the failed Denmark attack plot of 2009 famous as ‘Micky Mouse Project’ has stretched the group’s objective beyond Kashmir. Rhetorically, LeT has always been proclaiming to overwhelm the whole of India but till 2000, almost all of its activities were limited to J&K. However, Since the group’s attack on India’s Red Fort in New Delhi in 2000, its activities have been expanded beyond J&K and stretched towards the mainland India. LeT’s willingness to own the ‘Micky Mouse Project’ is a clear manifestation of the groups objective to project itself as the global defender of Islamic pride. On September 30, 2005, the Danish daily Jyllands-Posten published an article titled ‘Muhammeds ansigt’ (The face of Muhammed). The publication of the cartoons aused significant controversy in the Muslim community (USA Vs. David Coleman Headley:12).

The LeT’s primary objectives as defined by its pamphlet ‘*Hum Jihad Kyun Kar Rehen Hain*’ (Why We Are Waging Jihad?) in 1993 has not changed but now it has encompassed new objectives to upgrade the group’s standing and remain relevant in the contemporary time. The first and foremost objective of LeT is to remain focused on its anti-India activities and mobilize Pakistani people against India. In June 2010, David Headley told his interrogators that ‘India will remain a target for LeT’ (National Investigation Agency, 2010). This objective is in sync with Pakistan army’s bleed India agenda. Pakistan army’s obsession with India found expression in LeT’s periodical threat against India and its consistent terror activities in various parts of India. After the Shimla Accord of 1972, Pakistan cannot use force against India to alter boundary. Hence the army found a wayout and supported proxy force (Haqqani, 2003: 43). At a rally of Difa-e-Pakistan on December 18, 2011, Hafiz Saeed announced that ‘jihad was obligatory for Muslims’. He reiterated LeT’s commitment for Kashmir and said ‘we were with Kashmiris and are with Kashmiris (Tanveer, 2011: 26)’. In the same rally, Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki another LeT leader further clarified that ‘when LeT cadres head towards India with weapons, no one can resist them’. In a 2011 speech Sayeed claimed that the Prophet Muhammad had called for a war ‘against the Hindu so that the greatness of the jihad can be evident and after the success of this jihad (against the culture of pig), after the end of Judaism, after the end of Christianity, after the end of obscenity and irreligiousness, Islam will rule the world (Swami, 2012:9).’

The second most important objective of LeT as of 2012 is to unify all militants of Pakistan at the behest of Pakistan army and end the ‘current clash of institutions’ in Pakistan (Raja, 2012: 6). The emerging danger to Pakistan today emanates not from its traditional external adversary to the East – India – but from homegrown insurgency and militancy (Nawaz, 2011). Pakistan army’s decision to join US war on terrorism in Afghanistan had turned almost all militant groups of Pakistan against Pakistan. After a decade of war, as the US withdrawal from Afghanistan is nearing, Pakistan army again want to realign all the militants of Pakistan and direct them against India and use them to spread Pakistan’s influence in Afghanistan. LeT was the only outfit, which never oppose Pakistan army or attack any

Pakistani target and hence the Pakistan army is using LeT as a ‘Trojan Horse’ to bring the rest of the militant groups into its strategic thinking. The January 22, 2012 rally of Difa-e-Pakistan was attended by former Army Chief Gen. Mirza Aslam Baig and former ISI chief Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul; Difa-e-Pakistan. (January 24, 2012). Defence of Pakistan rally (Difa-e-Pakistan News, 2012). The Difa-e-Pakistan is a Pakistan army inspired and sponsored organization solely organized by the LeT. As early as in July 2011, when there was no trace of Difa-e-Pakistan, the LeT organized a gathering in Multan on July 23, 2011 and Hafiz Sayeed requested all religious parties and militant groups to unite politically, socially and nationally for the progress of Pakistan. He said ‘we need to end all of our internal grievances and work for the greater good (Raza, 2011: 2).’ The new umbrella group Sayeed proposed in Multan later became the Difa-e-Pakistan, which was formed in October 2011. The group’s website is a reflection of LeT’s objective. The website counted India’s atrocities on Muslim in detail and made India responsible for every single ill of Pakistan. The Difa-e-Pakistan discuss about India’s ‘Cold-Start’ doctrine and India’s desire to dominate the region after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan (Difa-e-Pakistan, 2012). The army is using Sayeed and his LeT to correct its so called mistake committed 10 years before by joining the US war on terrorism. In his address Sayeed said, ‘The current standoff between state institutions is the result of a sin that we committed 10 years ago by allowing our territory to be used against Afghan Muslims, and until we repent for that grave mistake, we will never be able to overcome these issues (Raja, 2012:3).’

While disagreements existed in between the civilian government and the army of Pakistan on a range of issues including Kashmir, the LeT’s objective is to position itself as close to the army as possible. Denying the role of militants like LeT and wars in the resolution of Kashmir dispute Prime Minister Gilani said, ‘Four wars have already been fought on the Kashmir issue but in the 21st century we cannot afford wars and we want to resolve issues through dialogue, diplomacy, prudent policy and national consensus’ (*Times of India*, 2012). Contrary to the civilian thinking, Army Chief Gen. Kayani said, ‘Pakistani secret agencies maintained contacts with ‘certain elements’ within the hierarchy of insurgent groups’ as ‘Pakistan cannot leave both its eastern and western borders insecure’ (Ghauri, 2011:12). By aligning the group’s objective with the army’s strategic vision, LeT has made tremendous progress.

The next objective of LeT is to gather support of rival militant factions and religious parties inside Pakistan (Siddiqui, 2012:4) and project itself as the flame bearer of Islam in Pakistan. While doing so the group wants to exert greater control on the Pakistani politics and decision-making (Sayeed, 2012). As part of mobilizing support from other religious groups of Berelvi and Deobandi bending, LeT has formed the Difa-e-Pakistan and managed to gather over 40 different religious leaders under one platform. Some of the groups present along with the JuD at the Difa-e-Pakistan platform like Sepahi Saheba Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi were earlier opposed to LeT. Although Hafiz Sayeed announced that, LeT ‘do not have any political aspirations, nor do we plan to run any election campaign’, his intension to influence Pakistani politics is explicit. He said, ‘We have a broader perspective of the dangers faced by Pakistan, for that we want to

unify the whole nation on a legitimate and focal point of defending the nation against any external aggression and conspiracy’. Answering a question on how can Difa-e-Pakistan influence the policy making and national issues and what does JuD believe in as an alternate to democratic politics he explained that ‘Islam emphasizes on public opinion and the system of Shura does respect the public sentiments and opinions’.

The final objective of LeT, rhetoric apart (*‘Nizam-e-Mustafa’* or Rule of God) (National Investigation Agency, 2010:14), is to use its fame after the Mumbai onslaught and became an international player. Earlier the LeT was resisting the call to enter the Afghan theater of war. The aggression and commitment to jihad shown by the several splinter groups in Afghanistan influenced many committed fighters to leave Kashmir centric outfits and join the Taliban category outfits. Infact, the LeT was compelled to consider the spectacular Mumbai strike of 2008 to keep the LeT terrorists out of the ambit of Afghan based militants. However, recently the group has shifted its stand and announced that ‘Pakistan and Afghanistan were like twin brothers; whoever tried to harm one, would have to face the people of the other country’ (Ranveer, , 2011: 5). This shift of stand is based on two facts; first the US withdrawal is nearing and hence Pakistan want a more proactive role of militants in Afghanistan and second, LeT has realized the fact that the group cannot remain immune to the development at the Western border (National Investigation Agency, 2010:60-61). As part of this strategy, LeT has reactivated its training camps in Afghanistan (Dorransoro, 2011:15) and started participating in attacks against Indian targets in Afghanistan (Rubin, 2010:A-13).

The Threat from LeT and US Policy

On October 7, 2001, the US started its war on terrorism in Afghanistan and within three months on December 26, 2001, the US Department of State designated LeT as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Since then high ranking US officials have continuously been appraising their home government about the potential danger posed by the LeT. Through the regular reporting of media, countless secret memos and numerous Congressional testimonies, the US government understood very well the danger of LeT. The appraisal of LeT to the US government are coming from its army, navy and diplomatic mission in foreign countries. On September 22, 2011, US Joint Chief of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen informed a Senate Committee that ‘It’s not just Haqqani because we’ve also had our challenges with LeT, which is an organization they (ISI) put in place. So in many ways, it’s the proxy piece here (Afghanistan)’ (Ricks, 2011). A similar appraisal was provided by US Pacific Command during April 2011. The commander of Pacific Command Admiral Robert Willard informed the Senate Armed Forces Committee that, ‘LeT deliberately targets westerners and specifically engages coalition forces in Afghanistan. US Pacific Command is keenly aware of the threat posed by this terrorist organization and continues to develop a coordinated multi-national and US inter-agency approach to address this global threat’ (Willard, 2011:20). A year before in March 2010, Admiral Willard had cautioned

the US government about LeT's intention to stretch its terror tentacle in sea and in other South Asian countries and said, 'Right now our concern is the movement of LeT and specifically their positioning in Bangladesh, Nepal, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka'. However, Admiral Willard admitted the fact that, 'They (LeT) are predominantly a threat to India' (Willard, 2010:19).

Since 2001, the US has been continuously chasing the LeT and its various aliases with the explicit intention of circumventing the group's activities and capacity. However, the calibrated chase has not been yielding any effective result so far because the ISI is guiding the group on how to evade the US chase. The LeT has been changing its name with surprising speed and with effortless ease. LeT in an attempt to evade restrictions, has established branch offices with different names and adopted a number of aliases. One branch Idara Khidmat-e-Khalq is a publicly acknowledged charitable arm of JuD and has its own web page with photos of hospitals and ambulances. Falah-e Insaniyat Foundation is another such alias of LeT. The US government asserted that 'LeT's other aliases include Paasbaan-e-Ahle-Hadith, Paasban-e-Kashmir, Al-Mansoorian, and Al-Nasaryeen'. The US has 'assess that LeT and LeT-associated militants will continue to use aliases in order to circumvent restrictions on their movement and operations' (Clinton, 2009). According to US intelligence report, 'as of January, 2009 JuD also operating under the alias Tehreek-e-Hurmat-e-Rasool. LeT's political affairs coordinator Khalid Waleed identified himself in late December 2008 as the chief organizer for a conference for Tehreek-e-Hurmat-e-Rasool'. On 6 February, 2009 the JuD held a Kashmir Solidarity Conference at which JuD renamed itself Tehreek-e-Azadi-e-Kashmir (TAK).

It required a government and intelligence arm of the US size to track LeT's ever-changing nomenclature and restrict its movement. LeT's potential to disturb war on terror in Afghanistan is well understood to the US. This is the reason, the US is continuously vigilante and likely to remain vigilante about the LeT in future. Pakistan's intermittent support to terrorist groups and militant organizations threatens to undermine regional security and endanger US national security objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan. US Secretary of State Mrs. Hillary Clinton warned that the 'ISI continue to maintain ties with a wide array of extremist organizations, in particular the Taliban, LeT and other extremist organization and these extremist organizations continue to find refuge in Pakistan and exploit Pakistan's extensive network of charities, NGOs, and madrassas' (Clinton, 2009). After the Headley affair, the US understood the fact that LeT has the capacity to recruit US citizen to orchestrate terror attack on the foreign soil.

Mike Mullen, the Chairman of US Joint Chiefs of Staff said on a visit to Islamabad on July 24, 2010 that the LeT had become 'a very dangerous organization and a significant regional and global threat' (*Daily Times*, 2010), a statement that no doubt rankled his Pakistani hosts. Alarmed by the international ambition of LeT, the CIA deputed a number of its agents, including Mr. Raymond Davis to focus exclusively on intelligence gathering on LeT. However, the Pakistani police caught Mr. Davis during the month of January 2011 after his shooting of two Pakistanis on the street of Lahore. American intelligence officials are convinced that LeT is no longer satisfied being the shadowy foot soldiers in

Pakistan's simmering border conflict with India. Its goals have broadened and LeT is committed to a campaign of jihad against the US and Europe, and against American troops in Afghanistan (Mazetti, 2011).

However, since India is the primary target of LeT, the US has always been diplomatic in its action against LeT. For example, the US has never asked the Pakistani government to stop Hafiz Sayeed's rubble rousing against India and US as he is touring all parts of Pakistan. The U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on four senior LeT leaders in May 2008 in an effort to stifle LeT's fundraising and operational capabilities. Those designated include Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, Haji Muhammad Ashraf and Mahmoud Mohammad Ahmed Bahaziq. A small reference was given to the public appearance of Hafiz Sayeed by the US government in a press release. The US spokesperson said, 'The US Government is concerned about the recent public appearances of Jamaat-ud-Dawa leader Hafiz Sayeed, including at a recent rally in Karachi'. The release further read, 'We have and continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to uphold its obligations in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1267/1989' (Department of State, 2012). Pakistan is taking shelter in a court order, which freed Hafiz Sayeed from his role in the Mumbai attack, and refusing to take action against him for his role in inciting jihad in Pakistan.

The US pressure on LeT in the coming days would more likely to be diplomatic, bureaucratic and legal in nature than any real hard ground action against the group. On September 28, 2011, the US announced the designation of two LeT leaders and founding members, Zafar Iqbal and Hafiz Abdul Salam Bhuttavi, in pursuant to Executive Order 13224. The US government stated that 'Over the past 20 years, Iqbal and Bhuttavi have been responsible for fundraising, recruitment, and indoctrination of operatives. By targeting the core of LeT's leadership, today's action aims to degrade its ability to facilitate its terrorist activities (US Department of Treasury, 2011).' However, as the announcement clarified, the US took 20 years to take action against Iqbal and Bhuttavi. As per the provision, designation of a person by the US treasury department means 'US persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with the designated persons and any assets they may have in the US are frozen'. So this order practically have less effect on the LeT activities as those designated by the US are hardly having any financial transaction with the US.

LeT and the 2013 Border Conflagration

Pakistan's internal insecurity, the country's militant landscape and the condition in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has a bearing on the 2013 border conflagration in between India and Pakistan. A new army doctrine framed in 2011 by the Pakistan army has identified the warfare being conducted by the TTP and other militant groups as the biggest threat to national security (Syed, 2013:1). Chief of Army Staff Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani had articulated

the new doctrine in his well-known independence night speech at Kakul on August 14, 2012, where he said, ‘We realise that the most difficult task for any army is to fight against its own people. But No state can afford a parallel system or a militant force’ (Syed, 2012:1). Apart from Pakistan’s internal assessment, Pakistan army has been under tremendous pressure from the US to conduct operation against the Haqqani Network. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff and Leon E. Panetta, Defence Secretary had expressed unhappiness with Pakistan’s progress in battling the Haqqani Network’s use of safe havens in Pakistan (Roulo, 2012). Irrespective of the internal and external pressure, Pakistan military is still to shed its relations with select militant groups. Apart from that, neither the army nor the political leadership is taking any strong decision against the militants. In October 2012, when the Taliban militants shot Pakistani teenager Malala Yousufzai of Mingora in the Swat District, there was widespread protest across Pakistan with numerous Mullahs and Ulemas issuing Fatwa against the Taliban assassins. Pakistani press reported that a national consensus appeared to be emerging in October 2012 for a decisive push against militants after the attack on Malala Yousufzai. But at that time too the military said it was for the political leaders to decide about an operation in North Waziristan and all of a sudden the consensus dissipated.

Pakistan military’s vexing attitude towards the militant was palpable. Despite the threat from the homegrown militants, the military was reluctant take action against them. The reluctance also stem from the fact that the military had faced defeats before the combined strength of the militants and forced to sign peace deals with them. Pakistan military action and peace deals with the militants — like the Shakai agreement of March 2004, the Sararogha agreement of February 2005, the Miramshah agreement of September 2006, the Khyber agreement of September 2008 and the Swat deals of April and May 2008 — ended in failure.

Four major groups dominate the present militant landscape of FATA (Roggio, 2012:1). These four groups are comprised of a) Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the most dreaded group of FATA led by Hakeemullah Mehsud and his deputy, Waliur Rehman Mehsud; b) Hafiz Gul Bahadar’s group (Gul Bahadar’s group is a small but powerful unnamed unit of Wazir tribe affiliated with Jamaat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazlur of Pakistan); c) Mullah Nazir’s group (Nazir’s group is the leading group of Wazir tribe in South Waziristan of FATA); and d) the Haqqani Network, led by former Taliban minister and veteran Afghan fighter Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son Sirajuddin Haqqani. In November 2011, senior al Qaeda leader Abu Yahya al Libi brokered a deal after reaching out to the most powerful Pakistani and Afghan Taliban commanders along the Afghan-Pakistan border to create a new alliance *Shura-e-Murakeba* to battle the US and NATO (Mehsud, 2012:10). The high-level meetings between al Libi and the leaders of the various Taliban factions took place during the temporary halt of US drone strikes in Pakistan after a clash with Pakistani forces in the Mohmand tribal agency that resulted in the deaths of 24 Pakistani soldiers on November 16, 2011. One major difficulty for the Pakistan army was TTP’s insistence that the alliance had never agreed on the issue of ceasing attacks on Pakistani security forces. Pakistan army was in a fix to find a solution.

During the end of December 2012, Hakimullah Mehsud made a statement where he said, his group was willing to negotiate with the Pakistani government if his preconditions are met. Along with a host of other demands, the TTP chief demanded that ‘Pakistan stop its involvement in the war pitting Afghan insurgents against the Kabul government and refocus on a war of revenge against India’ (*Express Tribune*, 2012). The TTP’s offer was actively considered by the Corps Commanders of Pakistan met under the chairmanship of the Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Kayani at Rawalpindi on January 3, 2013. Three days later, on January 6, 2013, Pakistani and Indian troops exchanged gunfire. Pakistan army alleged that Indian troops crossed the Line of Control (LoC) in Haji Pir sector and stormed the check post, which resulted in killing of one soldier (*Express Tribune*, 2013). Indian army refuted the allegations and said that its troops had not crossed into Pakistani territory and that it was only responding to an unprovoked Pakistani shelling across the Line of Control that destroyed a civilian house (Walsh, 2013: A-10). On January 8, 2013, a Pakistan army ‘Border Action Team’ crossed the LoC between Chhatri and Atma outposts in Jammu and Kashmir and ambushed an Indian army petrol team killing two soldiers of 13 Rajputana Rifles (*New York Times*, 2013). In the attack ‘the body of one soldier was found mutilated and beheaded, the body of the second soldier was also mutilated’ (*The Hindu*, 2013).

Reiterating the connection in between the militancy in Pakistan and Pakistan army’s reaction, India’s Home Minister Mr. Sushil Kumar Shinde informed that LeT chief Hafiz Saeed visited Pakistan Occupied Kashmir on 6th or 7th of January 2013 (*Business Line*, 2013). However, the most damning and glaring details about the Pakistani army’s attacks on Indian troops emerged when a classified Indian Army’s Military Intelligence (MI) report surfaced in an Indian newspaper. According to the report, there was a meeting between senior ISI officers, important terrorist commanders and guides a few days before the attack at Rawalkote in PoK. The meeting was presided over by a brigadier level officer of ISI and included Colonel Siddiqui (of Rawalkote), Azad Khan (of Peshawar), Yousuf Khan alias Pathan (of Muzaffarabad) and Major Abbasi (of Tattapani). Several guides familiar with the topography of line of control (LoC) were also present in the meeting. Among the guides who attended the meeting were Anwar Khan, Sabar Khan (of Battal, PoK) and Meeru (Madarpur, PoK). A local LeT operative Chaudhary Bashir was also present. ‘During the meeting, it was decided that local guides aware of the topography of the area would facilitate terrorist groups not only in infiltration along the LoC in Poonch district but also assist in operations by BATs. For this a reward of Rs 5,000 for planting of a mine on Indian soil, Rs 10,000 for killing an Indian Army soldier in sniper fire and Rs 5 lakh for beheading an Army jawan was announced. For each of these BAT operations, the guide would be rewarded Rs 2,000 to Rs 12,000’ (Chauhan, 2013:1). The MI report provided graphic details about the beheading of Indian soldiers. ‘The ambush by BAT from across in Krishna Ghati sector, 10 Inf Brigade, Mendhar, district Poonch in which two Army jawans of 13 Rajputana Rifles were killed was carried out by a group of 15 terrorists, having 10 members of Lashkar and 5 of Jaish-e-Mohammad. The group was led by Subedar Jabbar Khan of ISI unit of Tattapani (PoK) and included among others Anwar Khan, resident of Jabbar Mohalla of

village Sher Khan (Rawalkote) as the local guide, Qari Shah of LeT and Ajmat Khan of JeM. Anwar Khan carried out the beheading of one of the soldiers'. The MI report said, Colonel Siddiqui of ISI handed over the Rs. 5 Lakh reward to Anwar Khan.

The border conflagration was an indication of Pakistani army's willingness to accept TTP's pre-condition for talk. Pakistan faces an insurgency in the north with terrorist strikes being carried out by the Pakistani Taliban, a separatist movement in Balochistan province and ever increasing ethnic and sectarian violence in Karachi. The army, which has endured heavy casualties fighting the Pakistani Taliban, is deeply reluctant to get involved in more fighting (Rashid, 2012). By attacking India, Pakistan army is hoping to tame its homegrown militants and expecting to deflect the internal problem of Pakistan to the age-old India-Pakistan conflict.

Conclusion

Having the advantages to decide the timing, place, element of surprise and choice of instrumentalities for a terror act, terrorist always walk a step ahead of the security forces. However, with superior intelligence, excellent inter-departmental coordination and constant vigil, terror attacks could be minimized if not eliminated. In 2002, the US created a single, unified Department of Homeland Security to protect America. Subsequently, most of the nations including UK, France, Germany and Australia revamped their security laws. Because of the new awareness and alertness of the security forces, the US has prevented 25 terror attacks after the September 11 terrorist strike on America (Carafano, 2007:4).

Contrary to the experience of the West, India's record in containing terrorism is dismal and the country's systemic failure is taking epidemic proportion. The attacks on Pune, Bangalore, Varanasi, Mumbai and Delhi from 2010 to 2012 were testimonies of the fact that security apparatus of India are still vulnerable. Delhi had a close shave on May 2011 when a car bomb planted outside the Delhi High Court, mercifully caused no loss of life, apparently because the electronic circuits in the explosive device malfunctioned in the extreme heat. No lesson learned and within four months, on September 7, 2011 the terrorist returned with better preparation to bomb and devastate the same place. The failure of India to prevent such attacks are all the more unsettling as conditions in Pakistan deteriorate by the day, making the risks of another Mumbai-style attack impossible to ignore. While, on one hand, Pakistan professes to be a frontline state in the fight against terror, thereby garnering massive US monetary and military assistance, on the other it provided a safe house to bin Laden and sanctuaries to Afghan Taliban leaders, hobnobbing with the Haqqani network and coordinating the activities of groups like LeT (Kapoor, 2012:20).

Finally, while the LeT is consistent in its effort to increase influence and capacity in Pakistan, India has been doing preciously little to counter the group. Indian civil police, which is the primary agency to face terrorist has an acute

shortage of automatic weapons and ammunitions besides inadequate bullet proof jackets. Karkare's death in Mumbai attack made the officers nervous and triggered an ugly cover-up operation. Soon after Karkare was wheeled into hospital for treatment, the substandard bulletproof jacket he was wearing went missing. The file about the purchase of the jackets too went missing (Khetan, 2010). ATS Chief Hemant Karkare died during his encounter with LeT terrorists despite wearing a bullet proof vest. A report dated September 16, 2004 of the Mumbai Police mentioned that the bulletproof vests did not meet the required standards and could not protect fire from AK-47 rifles. The Mumbai police is carrying bullet proof jacket of 1993 vintage, weighing about 10/12 kg (Maharashtra Government, 2008:77). Likewise the police force face lack of modern communication equipment/systems while facing serious situation such as 26/11 when all the communication channels had got clogged. Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan revealed that in the first fifteen minutes after July 13, 2011 serial blasts in Mumbai, he was unable to call his senior-most police officers and bureaucrats because mobile networks were congested (NDTV, 2011). Such unpreparedness on the part of India is an invitation to the LeT terrorist. Without a real time threat awareness and response mechanism, India would remain open to the target of LeT.

The union home ministry has too many security agencies to deal with making it highly unwieldy and ineffective against terror strikes. The immediate need for India is a strong policy with no clemency for terror, an integrated security department, tough terror law, fast track special court for terrorist crime, modernization of the British-era police structure, and special mega city policing. With the US war on terror reaching nowhere in Afghanistan, terrorists have made the wild west of Pakistan as their safe heaven. The country's intelligence agency has also been facilitating to make Pakistan as an undisturbed sanctuary for terrorists. The militants are eager to come to India to replicate Mumbai strike. The instability in Pakistan and the control of military in the functioning of government signaling future peril against the existing calm in the region. The US, a partner of Pakistan in the fight against al Qaeda and Taliban, could do little but to perform a balancing act in its diplomacy in the region. A country of India's size can hardly depend or rely on the support and security assurance of any foreign government. Political consensus, national resolve, technical advancement, superior weapons, training and enthusiastic zeal to implement the policy and a time bound legal system against terror act are the pressing need of the hour. The catastrophe and danger attached with the delay to understand the need of the hour is that, 'next time when the terrorists come, they might come with chemical and biological weapons' to challenge India.

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