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Klaus Lange (ed.)

**Security in South Asia:
Conventional and Unconventional
Factors of Destabilization**

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Imprint

ISBN	978-3-88795-356-0
Publisher	Copyright © 2009, Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung e.V., Munich Lazarettstr. 33, 80636 Munich, Tel. +49-89-1258-0 E-Mail: info@hss.de , online: www.hss.de
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Print	Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung e.V., Munich

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Islamic terrorism in India: organizations, tentacles and networks

Animesh Roul

For decades now, India has been facing various forms and waves of terrorist violence ranging from separatist and ethnic terrorism to ideological and religion-driven terrorism. With the emergence of new and hybrid terror organizations and conglomerates, there has been a sea change in the nature of terror tactics, technology and the way terror tentacles and networks have spread in the hinterlands of India and beyond.

India battles terror violence in three major geographical zones: Jammu and Kashmir (jihadi separatist, cross-border terrorism), Northeastern States (separatists, ethno-Islamist, cross-border terrorism) and Central-Eastern States (Left-wing Extremism/Naxalism). However, since the 13 December 2001 terror attack on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi that marked the beginning of this century, the country has been experiencing serious menaces from Islamic terrorist groupings that have infiltrated into India mostly from neighbouring countries with the sole objective of perpetrating the so-called Islamic jihad. With the expansion of terror bases and sleeper cells across the country, these terror groups are increasing their activities in the urban centres of India, targeting strategic infrastructures and financial lifelines of the country in order to cripple it.

Before the December 1992 demolition of Babri Masjid, a mosque in Ayodhya in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, terrorism in India was to some extent synonymous with the Khalistan movement in Punjab which was separatist in nature. Subsequently, Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism emerged as a proxy war strategy which later developed into a systematic terrorist movement against India.

This paper focuses on Islamic terrorism in India, with particular attention to the major groups operating and perpetrating violence in the country and their operational and logistical linkages with each other.

At least two sets of players are involved in terrorism in India. The first set comprises Pakistani and Bangladesh-based terror groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami (HuJI). The second set is composed of a network of disgruntled Muslim youth, students and criminal elements which largely work as a support system, e.g. the Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). Past research has shown that a small section of India's Muslims – now called home-grown jihadists – has taken to terrorism and has acquired international links in recent times. Terrorism among Indian Muslims appears to have originated following the Babri Mosque demolition in 1992. Since then, the potential for home-grown terrorism has grown extensively throughout the country and was further aggravated by the 2002 Gujarat communal riots.

In recent times, JeM and LeT along with the HuJI-Bangladesh are collectively utilizing India's porous eastern border for anti-India activities by establishing 'surrogate bases' in neighbouring Bangladesh, Nepal and in the Middle East for the movement of trained cadres and finances for their operations. These groups are recruiting Indian youths, sending them to Pakistan for training and re-inducting them via Bangladesh to carry out terrorist attacks in India's heartland. Many recent terror strikes like the serial blasts in Delhi, twin blasts in Varanasi, mosque and market blasts in Hyderabad and

the Mumbai carnage are the results of the collective efforts of these groups.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India has noted in its Annual Reports that involvement by JeM, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Bangladesh-based HuJI has been observed in most of the terror strikes in the country. And the recent emergence of Indian Mujahideen (IM) as a home-grown, indigenous jihadi organization with active support from all Pakistan-based terror groups has created new fears in the Indian security establishment. Most disturbingly, these groups have been using their sleeper cells to carry out urban and mass casualty attacks.

1. Major terror organizations operating in India

1.1 Lashkar-e-Taiba

Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Pure) is the most deadly Pakistan-based terror organization that has been perpetrating the maximum number of attacks in India's heartland. Apart from its traditional area of operation in Jammu and Kashmir, the group has spread its tentacles from Western Gujarat to the eastern border of Manipur and West Bengal, and from the southern state of Kerala to Jammu and Kashmir in the North.

The LeT is the military wing of the erstwhile religious organization, Markaz Da'wat wa'l Irshad (MDI), which later changed its name into Jama'at-ud-Da'wah (JuD) following the 9/11 events in the USA when the Lashkar group was banned and declared a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the United States. Hafiz Muhammad Saeed is the chief of Lashkar-e-Taiba. Some of the prominent LeT operatives are Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, Yahiya Mujahid (spokesman), Abdullah Muntazer Gaznavi (media handler) and Abu Hamza.

LeT's presence in J&K was first detected after many Pakistani and Afghan mercenaries infiltrated across the Line of Control (LoC) in tandem with the Islami Inquilabi Mahaz, a terrorist group then active in the Poonch district of J&K in the early 1990s. However, the first ever attack was reported in August 1992 when LeT militants killed nearly 19 Indian Army soldiers in J&K.¹ At a meeting held at Tehran in 1993, the LeT had forged an understanding with the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference (JKPC) and Al Barq. This paved the way for their joint operation and mission in J&K.

The JUD/LeT and their leaderships are affiliated to the Ahle Hadith school of thought, a reformist Islamic movement.² The objectives of LeT are to establish Nizam-e-Mustafa (God's government) in the world and the merger of J&K with Pakistan. At the behest of Pakistan's ISI, it later added anti-India goals: to destabilize India and impede its economy. LeT has introduced fidayeen missions (suicide tactic used by terrorists) in Jammu and Kashmir and has intermittently struck in India's heartlands with its tactics of indiscriminate shooting and grenade attacks.

Pakistan's July 2009 dossier admitted for the first time that the LeT carried out the 26 November 2008 multiple Mumbai attacks. The dossier named senior LeT operative Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi as the mastermind. Among many of its signature acts, LeT operatives carried out the October 2005 serial bomb explosions in Delhi and the December 2005 attack on the Indian Institute of Science campus in Bangalore. With a penchant for attacking security forces, especially the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), LeT carried out an audacious attack on a CRPF recruitment centre in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh, on 1 January 2008.³ This New Year's Day attack on the CRPF recruitment centre was considered to be the dress rehearsal for the Mumbai mayhem later that year, and it came just over a month after the November 2007 multiple blasts in court

premises in three major cities of Uttar Pradesh: Lucknow, Faizabad and Varanasi.⁴

1.2 Jaish-e-Mohammed

Jaish-e-Mohammed (Army of the Prophet) is a Pakistani-based terrorist grouping mainly active in Jammu and Kashmir in its initial phase, but later collaborating with LeT for terror acts beyond J&K. Maulana Masood Azhar is the supreme leader of JeM which is a splinter group of Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami (HuJI), an Islamic organization that was formed in the early 1980s to fight the war against the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan. JeM's leader Maulana Masood Azhar was a member of HuJI before he established his own organization on 31 January 2000 in Karachi in Pakistan.⁵ Before that, Azhar was one of the three jailed terrorists released from prison in India in December 1999 in exchange for hostages in the hijacked Indian Airlines Flight IC-814.⁶

In common with other J&K-centric organizations, this group believes in the secession of the state with the ultimate aim of merger with Pakistan and the destabilization of India. The group claims that each of its offices in Pakistan would serve as schools of jihad. Most of the Jaish-e-Mohammed terror acts are fidayeen (suicide terrorist) attacks in which terrorists of the organization storm a high-security target, including security forces' bases, camps and convoys before they are killed by retaliatory action.

The unit is closely linked through the Binoria madrassa in Karachi with the former Taliban regime of Afghanistan and its protégé Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaida network. The JeM is also reported to have links with Sunni terrorist groups operating in Pakistan such as the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ). Supporters are mostly Pakistanis and Kashmiris, but also include Afghans and Arab veterans of the Afghan war. Its activity

has been expanded to many other parts of the country, including the Indian Parliament attack on 13 December 2001. Prior to this, JeM had perpetrated a similar kind of suicide operation in storming the J&K Legislative Assembly in October 2001 and killing nearly 35 persons, including 10 security force personnel.

1.3 Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami

Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami, the 'Movement of Islamic Holy War', has emerged as the largest international Sunni Islamic jihadi organization created in and by Pakistan after the Lashkar-e-Taiba. It is broadly based in two countries as HuJI-Pakistan and HuJI-Bangladesh (HuJI-B), whereby the latter is more potent than the former. HuJI-B cadres are active in India and they are mostly infiltrated from India's eastern corridors. The organization has perpetrated attacks in collaboration with other Pakistani-based groups such as JeM, LeT and home-grown radicals from the Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). HuJI has existed in the subcontinent since the early 1980s with active support from Pakistan-based Deobandi religious bodies, including the Jamaat-ul-Ulema-e-Islami (JuI), and most recently it has set up Indian units in Uttar Pradesh. It also has bases in Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

With direct logistical help from LeT, JeM and SIMI, HuJI has coordinated many attacks in India in the recent past including the March 2006 Sankatmochan Temple blast in Varanasi. HuJI's involvement in the May 2007 twin blasts in Hyderabad and in the serial bomb blasts of May 2008 in Jaipur came to light during the investigations.

HuJI defined itself as the second line of defense for every Muslim.⁷ Its initial objective was to organize relief camps for the Afghan mujahideen during the Soviet-Afghan war. Afterwards, it began to recruit and train

mujahideen with support from ISI and grew as a terrorist grouping. Since it has different units in different countries, it has multiple objectives and activities. HuJI contingents operating in Pakistan or Jammu and Kashmir initially focused on liberating J&K, but its current mobilization outside J&K demonstrates its present strategy to spread terrorism across the country and destabilize India with support from the proscribed Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), ISI and other Islamist extremists.

Apart from having a base in Bangladesh, Pakistan, J&K and some other pockets in India, by 2005 the group had spread its tentacles to almost 24 countries, including Chechnya, Fiji, Iran, Ireland, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and parts of Africa and the Middle East.⁸ In March 2008, the US blacklisted Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B) for attacks in India and other countries, as a "global terrorist organization".⁹

1.4 Indian Mujahideen

Indian Mujahideen (IM) has emerged as a well-organized jihadi terrorist group in India, claiming responsibility for a number of terror attacks perpetrated in various urban centres of India during 2007-2008. Even though the exact moment of IM's formation is not known, the recent arrest of a number of IM operatives has revealed its possible existence and involvement in terror strikes in India as far back as late October 2005. The name "Indian Mujahideen" was reportedly conceived at a terrorist conclave attended by top leaders of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami (HuJI) in Pakistani-administered Kashmir in early May 2008.

IM came into the open for the first time in November 2007, when simultaneous bomb blasts targeted lawyers in court premises in

three Uttar Pradesh cities: Varanasi, Faizabad and Lucknow. IM described the attacks as "Islamic raids" and justified them as revenge against lawyers who had allegedly assaulted a couple of Jaish-e-Muhammad terrorist suspects. IM also alleged that the lawyers had refused to take cases involving other alleged terrorists, including suspected HuJI leader and Phulpur-based Islamic cleric Muhammad Waliullah, the alleged mastermind of the March 2006 Sankatmochan temple blasts in Varanasi.

Basically, members of IM are mainly drawn from proscribed organizations such as the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), the Pakistan-based LeT and the Bangladesh-based HuJI. IM's email statements indicate their ties with SIMI when they put forward demands for the release of SIMI cadres under detention or serving jail terms. However, the newly emerged IM continues to deny any connection with Pakistan, Bangladesh, or any of their agencies (e.g. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI] and Bangladesh's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence [DGFI]). It also denies any links with terrorist groups such as LeT and HuJI.

The Indian Mujahideen has been trying to garner support from India's teeming Muslim population, often by raising indigenous issues in its manifestos. Since the Uttar Pradesh court attacks, IM, as a home-grown jihadi unit, has claimed responsibility for at least four major terror strikes in 2008 that targeted civilians. Each attack came with prior emails to the media citing a list of anti-Muslim atrocities in the country. The group justifies the violence by tagging the terror campaign as the "rise of Jihad" and the revenge of "Gujarat".¹⁰

The top leaders have been identified as Riyaz Bhatkal, Abdul Subhan Qureshi Amir Reza, Iqbal Bhatkal, Muhammad Khalid, Shahzad Ahmed, and Ariz Khan. The most surprising revelation has been the many IT professionals found to be involved in IM's

activities, including wealthy professionals Asghar Peerbhoy, Salman Kadar Shaikhand, and Asif Bashiruddin Shaikh, who have played pivotal roles in generating funds for the organization and planning attacks.¹¹

The Indian Mujahideen has four wings, each wing having a distinct responsibility for spreading terror in India with the active assistance of LeT:¹² Shahabuddin Ghouri Brigade which is headed by Amir Raza and largely responsible for planning and executing attacks in southern India.

The Muhammad Ghaznavi Brigade is responsible for planning and executing terror strikes in northern India and Shaheed-al-Zarqawi Brigade is responsible for targeting political and other important personalities of the country as well as organizing suicide attacks. IM has a media wing which is headquartered in Pune, Maharashtra. The wing is responsible for email and print media communications and press releases of manifestos before or after the blasts.

The arrest of IM cadres from different locations demonstrates the geographical spread of a terror network that now spans the length and breadth of India – possibly even extending into neighbouring states.

1.5 Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)

SIMI was founded in 1977 at the University of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, as a radical student organization. The interlinked triad of the ummah, caliphate and jihad determined SIMI's postures and activities in the country thereafter – the group's logo includes a Quran, an AK-47 assault rifle and a globe. SIMI started as a united platform for Muslim students and youth in the country, with the objective of restoring the caliphate to bring about the unity of the ummah by rejecting the concept of nationalism, secularism and

democracy. The group's aim was to establish Dar-ul-Islam (land of Islam) by using violence, if necessary, to convert non-Muslims.

In the early 1990s, SIMI activists were indoctrinated by Pakistan's ISI and travelled far and wide to garner support. The grouping convened an Ikhwanul (Muslim Brotherhood) conference in Kanpur city in October 1999 which was attended by around 20,000 people including Sheikh Yaseen (Hamas), Qazi Hussain Ahmed (JI, Pakistan) and the imam of the Al-Aqsa mosque. In 2001, SIMI again convened a mass conclave in Mumbai, especially for Muslim youths. It was here that SIMI urged fellow Indian Muslims to launch an armed jihad in India with the establishment of an Islamic caliphate as the goal. The SIMI network is actively involved in conversion in the southwestern states of India.

Kashmir-centric Pakistani terrorist groups like Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad have had strong logistical and operational ties with SIMI. In late 2002, Maharashtra police seized as many as 30 compact discs containing speeches of Maulana Masood Azhar, chief of Jaish-e-Muhammad, along with clippings of communal riots in Gujarat from SIMI offices in Aurangabad. Also, SIMI's pro-Taliban stance in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the group's anti-US demonstrations in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan, and SIMI's glorification of Osama bin Laden as the ultimate "jihadi" prompted the Indian government to impose a ban on the group in 2001.¹³

After the government proscription, SIMI operated closely with the Hyderabad-based Tehreek Tahaffuz-e-Shair-e-Islam and the radical Islamic vigilante unit, the Darsghah Jihad-o-Shahadat ("Institute for Holy War and Martyrdom") which has countrywide centres teaching self-defense to Muslim youths, and aims to make the Quran the constitution of

India.¹⁴ SIMI also operated through the Islamic Youth Front in Kerala and the Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnetra Kazhagam.

Intelligence agencies have established SIMI's involvement in major terrorist strikes in India and believe that the organization has created the country's first home-grown terror network called the Indian Mujahideen (IM). SIMI attempts to indoctrinate youths by convincing them to fight for Islam. To accomplish this goal, SIMI uses provocative audio and video clippings which selectively depict the atrocities committed against Muslims from Gujarat to Kashmir and from Bosnia to Afghanistan.

Having originally started as a student movement, SIMI has in due course become a major radical Islamist movement with a strong presence in most of the northern and southern states of India. SIMI, along with other militant groups, has jointly carried out many terrorist acts including the 13 September 2008 serial blasts in Delhi and multiple explosions in Ahmadabad and Jaipur as well as blasts in the Uttar Pradesh courts in the recent past.

SIMI has operational ties with many foreign militant student groups, including the Saudi Arabian Jamayyatul Ansar (JA), whose membership comprises former SIMI activists and expatriate Indian Muslims.

2. Ties and tentacles

The previous section has described terror networks, the occasionally symbiotic relations among terror groups operating in the region, and their geographical distribution. Relying on recent investigations into various terrorists events, this section looks more closely into the intricate ties between LeT and other terror groupings and how their terror tentacles have been spreading in the region and beyond.

For the past few years terrorist units have been trying to increase their geographical span by operating in southern and western parts of the Indian states Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. In fact, there are reports of terrorist groups poised to infiltrate into the country through the coastlines and island provinces of Indian southern territories. For instance, the LeT has already established a Marine Jihad Unit to operate against India.¹⁵ Besides the usual routes of intrusion in Jammu and Kashmir, LeT has managed to build alternate routes through the porous borders of Nepal and Bangladesh as well while establishing bases in the Gulf countries. Investigating agencies have now confirmed that LeT is working on a new strategy which involves using Dubai as the centre of planning for future strikes against India. Past and ongoing terror investigations suggest the Gulf countries have been major hubs for LeT terrorists, and many terrorist plots against India are now hatched outside Pakistan's territory. The recent arrest and interrogation of a top LeT operative and close confidant of Hafiz Saeed revealed the future terror plans in the country. Md Umer Madni who was arrested in the capital Delhi had been in touch with LeT's Hafiz Saeed since 2000 and was involved in "talent scouting" for the Lashkar-e-Taiba in India.¹⁶ Madni is also the LeT commander in Nepal. He confessed to having travelled far and wide inside the country and also in neighbouring Nepal and Bangladesh with the purpose of jihadi recruitment, fund-raising activities, and sending youths to terror training camps in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir. He had claimed to know terror masterminds Sabahuddin and Fahim Ansari who were arrested and accused of the November 2008 Mumbai attacks.

The recent spurt of terror activities by the LeT in India is directly linked to contributions from the Gulf-based cells that have planned and financed most of the group's operations. The LeT's Gulf-based networks are becoming the lifeline for LeT/JuD operations

in Pakistan and India. Investigations by India's intelligence agencies into the 2008 urban attack uncovered ties to many Gulf countries, especially the financial networks in Muscat, Oman. At least four LeT operatives handled India operations from Gulf cities such as Muscat and Sharjah. They are identified as Wali, Muslim Basheer, Sarfaraz Nawaz and Abu Haroon. These four are believed to be of Pakistani origin and to have been deputed in the Gulf to raise funds and monitor operations planned for India. While Wali was involved in fundraising activities and was responsible for coordinating with SIMI and IM militants in India, Muslim Basheer, based in Muscat, was the chief coordinator for the LeT in the Gulf. Funds for terrorist operations were raised by Wali, who provided the money for the blasts and who sent youths from the southwestern state of Kerala to Pakistan-Administered Kashmir (PAK) for terrorist training.¹⁷

Investigating agencies identified Abu Haroon, a travel agent in Muscat, as the operative who facilitated the movement of money to India from the Gulf region through hawala channels. Abu Haroon also coordinated between the Lashkar leadership in Pakistan and India. The fourth terrorist, Sarfaraz Nawaz, another LeT man from Muscat and a former SIMI leader was brought from Muscat to India recently in an extraordinary rendition by India's external intelligence agency in early 2009. Also, three other terrorists involved in the July 2008 Bangalore serial blasts and other incidents have been identified as Saleem and Jaheed from Bangladesh (hawala operators) and Ali Abdul Azeez Hooti of Oman, the chief terrorist financier.

The Gulf's increasing ties to terrorism resurfaced when investigations into the November 2008 Mumbai carnage tracked a similar pattern involving Gulf-based financiers and Lashkar coordinators. The role of Aziz Hooti as one of the financiers in this connection is currently under investigation. Hooti, the Oman-based businessman and

key Lashkar operative there, was in touch with LeT's Fahim Ansari just before the November 2008 carnage in Mumbai. According to the information shared between Oman and Indian police, Aziz Hooti could have had direct ties to the Mumbai attackers. It is now believed in investigating circles that both Aziz Hooti and Nawaz played vital roles in financing terrorist activities in India, especially in providing funds for Indians undergoing jihadi training in the PAK region.

Nawaz's interrogation has revealed many facts about Lashkar's plans in southern India. According to his statement, he and Ummer Haji, an IM cadre and key figure in the terror network in south India, had hatched a plan to carry out serial bomb blasts in Chennai and Bangalore. However, Lashkar's Chennai plot was dropped by Wali due to funding issues. Haji is the man who sent Kerala youths to Muzaffarabad in Kashmir for training. Aziz Hooti was also involved in the Bangalore plan while the terrorist triumvirate (Wali, Nawaz and Hooti) met in Sharjah in early 2008. Nawaz's statement also sheds some light on Lashkar's operational strategy in southern India.

The beginning of 2009 was marked by a crackdown by Islamabad on the LeT and other Pakistan-based terror groups in which LeT came under severe pressure from the Pakistan administration to de-escalate its jihadi agenda against India. Despite the crackdown and the detention and subsequent release of LeT leaders in Pakistan, the LeT is reportedly once again looking to strike India by plotting against its vital installations and infrastructure.

3. Conclusion

It can be argued that in India the Kashmir-centric cross-border terrorism fuelled by Islamabad's territorial ambition and proxy war strategy has recently become fodder for Islamic extremists to spread their tentacles

beyond Jammu and Kashmir. Although the Federal government has proscribed numerous organizations for their anti-India activities, many are still flourishing with political and religious patronage from across the borders. Groupings like HuJI, LeT, Jaish and Hizb are still targeting India and getting all their support from Pakistan's ISI and its Bangladeshi counterpart, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), who have formed a deadly alliance against India. It must be noted that most of these above-mentioned terrorist groups are members of Osama bin Laden's International Islamic Front and have vowed to fight for the Muslim ummah (the community of believers). India has been experiencing cross-border terrorism from its eastern frontier too. The territory of Bangladesh has been used as a safe haven for various militant groups operating in India's northeastern states and elsewhere. There is clear evidence that the growing Islamization of northeast India has been facilitated by Pakistan's ISI and spurred by political instability in bordering Bangladesh. The extremely violent United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) is now in the grips of ISI and DGFI along with Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA). Also, the recent arrest of a Lashkar-e-Taiba operative, Mufti Obaidullah, revealed the spreading networks of LeT in neighbouring Bangladesh. Obaidullah who is originally from India's West Bengal state told his interrogators that his task was to organize jihad in Bangladesh in cooperation with HuJI¹⁸ and Bangladesh-based Jam'atul Mujahedin of Bangladesh (JMB) operatives.

It can be argued that Indian Muslims are susceptible to the global jihadi agenda and the worldwide Islamist call for a Muslim caliphate. However, there is a difference of opinion about the current growth of the homegrown jihadi threat in India. One section of scholars which includes the political elites (secular parties like the Samajwadi Party, Congress and other pro-Muslim regional parties) hold that Indian Muslims are

quite immune to the global jihadist movement, and that the call for the same from Bin Laden, Al-Qaida or LeT does not impact Indian Muslims.

Another school of thought argues that this mindset of the Indian Muslim is fast eroding and that the last couple of decades have witnessed many Indian youths falling prey to jihadist thought and its agenda, perhaps as a result of concerted efforts from Pakistan and Gulf-based agencies.

This discourse notwithstanding, there do exist minuscule but strong jihadi elements which often raise the issue of J&K, the Gujarat pogrom and the Babri Mosque demolition in the context of global as well as Indian Muslim suffering. They are now also backed by pro-Muslim human rights activists and anti-violence NGOs and political or religious groupings. Since the November 2008 Mumbai attacks, the Ministry of Home Affairs has accepted that terrorist groups including LeT and JeM have found support among disgruntled elements within India.

India cannot remain in permanent denial that there is no involvement of Indian-born Muslims in international terror events: they have been implicated in incidents like the UK terror plots, and include terrorist suspects such as Dhiren Barot, Haroon Aswat, and Kafeel Ahmed. India figures intermittently in the jihad propaganda of Al-Qaida and LeT. Al Qaeda's Adam Yahye Gadhafi and the group's deputy commander Ayman al-Zawahiri have made calls in many videos for attacks against India. Masood Azhar and Hafeez Saeed constantly target India in their regular preaching and often directly brainwash youths to unleash jihad against India.

The radicalized – read Talibanized – neighbours of India have also had an indirect impact on the mindset of Indian Muslims and made them less tolerant towards other religions and society at large.

This is the current reality in India: there is a new phase of Islamic extremism emerging in the country, with home-grown jihadists

raising their heads and major terror groupings choosing to combine forces and opt for a collective execution of terror plans.

Notes

- ¹ Rana, Muhammed Amir: Gateway to Terrorism, New Millennium Publication, London 2003, p.347.
- ² The Ahle Hadith (also Ahle Hadees) has been influential in the subcontinent with active ties with Saudi Wahhabis and strong diaspora links. Literally meaning the "People of the Tradition of the Prophet", Ahle Hadith is called non-conformist by rival Islamic movements, mostly because the movement does not conform to any of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence or the commentaries and legal opinions based on them.
- ³ UP: Terror attack on CRPF camp, 8 killed, in: Rediff.com, 1.1.2008.
- ⁴ Terror strikes Uttar Pradesh; 15 killed in six blasts, in: Zee News, 23.11.2007.
- ⁵ Rana, Muhammed Amir: Gateway to Terrorism, New Millennium Publication, London 2003, p.202.
- ⁶ For a detailed timeline of this high-profile hijacking and hostage crisis, see URL <http://www.indianembassy.org/archive/IC_814.htm#The Chronology of Events>
- ⁷ With a pan-Islamic world view and strong international linkages, HuJI aims to fight for all Muslims. For one of the earliest publications on HuJI and its motto, see Ahmed Khaled: The biggest militia we know nothing about, in: Friday Times, 20.5.2002.
- ⁸ Singh, Khurshchev: HuJI after the death of its India chief, IDSA Strategic Comments, New Delhi, 13.2.2008.
- ⁹ US designates HuJI as global terrorist organization, in: Hindustan Times, 7.3.2008.
- ¹⁰ The Rise of Jihad, Revenge of Gujarat: in: Outlook India, 29.7.2008.
- ¹¹ Roul, Animesh: India's Home-Grown Jihadi Threat: A Profile of the Indian Mujahideen, in: Terrorism Monitor (Jamestown Foundation), Volume 7, Issue 4, 3.3.2009.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Roul, Animesh: Students Islamic Movement of India: A Profile, in: Terrorism Monitor (Jamestown Foundation) Volume 4, Issue 7, 6.4.2006.
- ¹⁴ Despite ban, SIMI worked through front outfits, in: Times of India, 29.3.2008.
- ¹⁵ Lashkar militants began killing spree in high seas, in: Daily Excelsior, 30.11.2008.
- ¹⁶ LeT militant Omar Madni remanded, in: The Hindu, 2.6.2009.
- ¹⁷ For a detailed report, see: Roul, Animesh, Lashkar-e-Taiba's Financial Network Targets India from the Gulf States, in: Terrorism Monitor, Volume 7, Issue 19, 2.7.2009.
- ¹⁸ Huji's Hannan, Lashkar's Obaidullah old friends, in: Daily Star (Dhaka), 23.7.2009.